

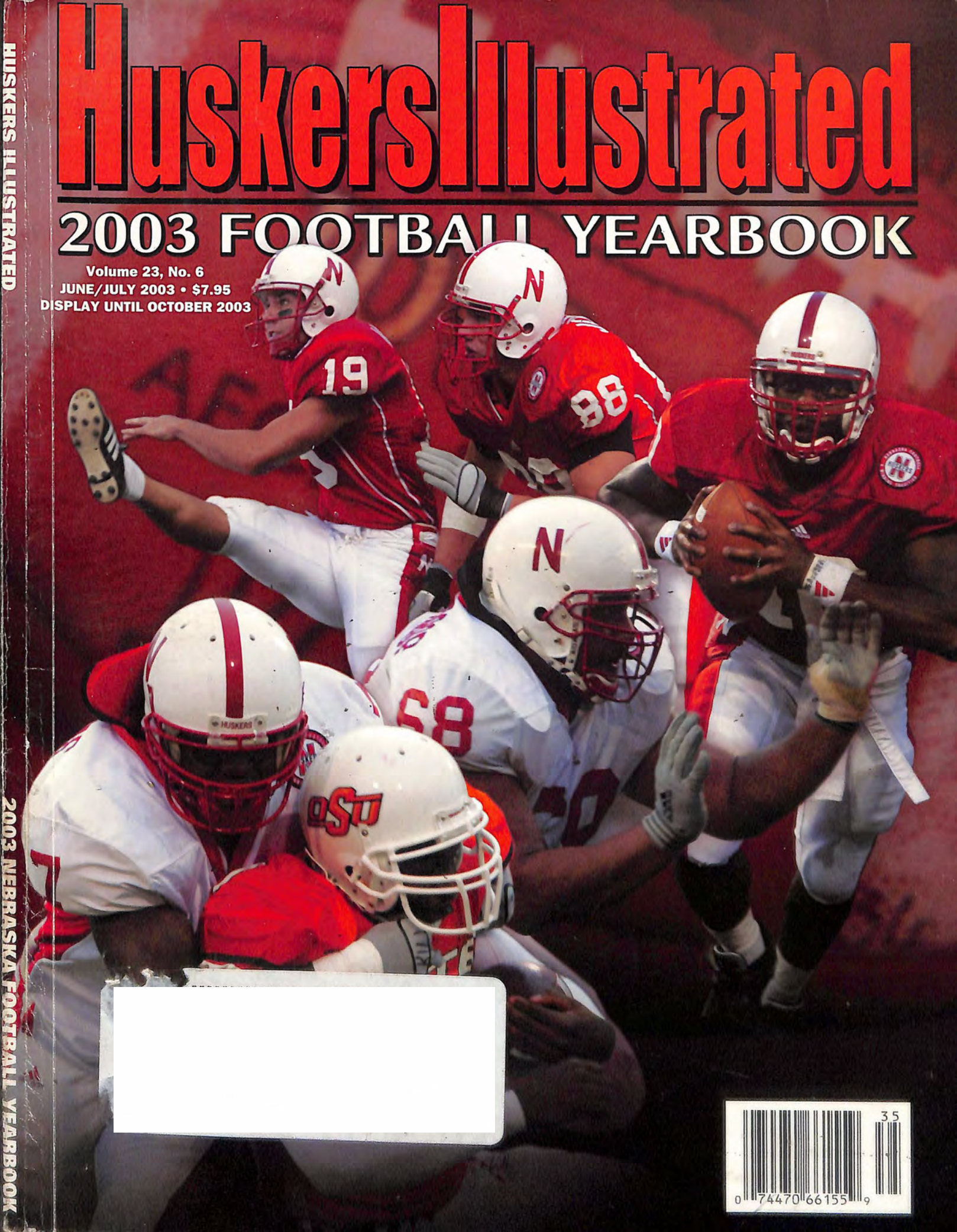
Huskers Illustrated

2003 FOOTBALL YEARBOOK

Volume 23, No. 6

JUNE/JULY 2003 • \$7.95

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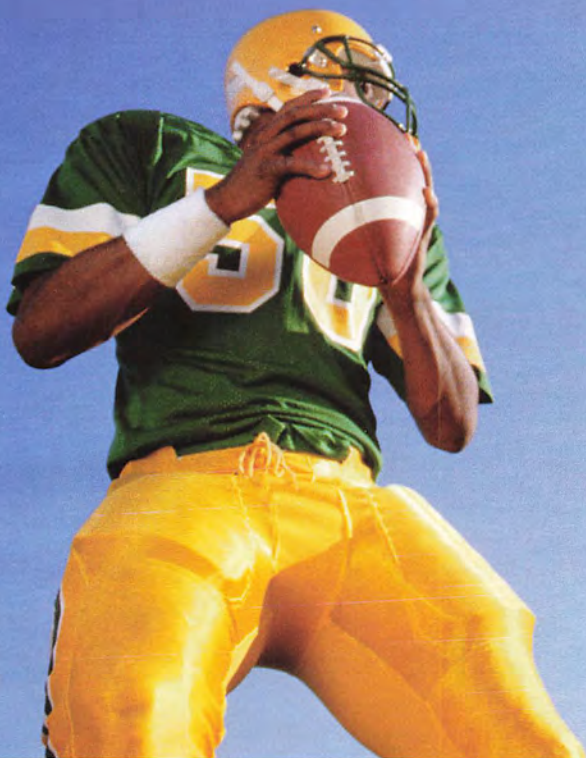


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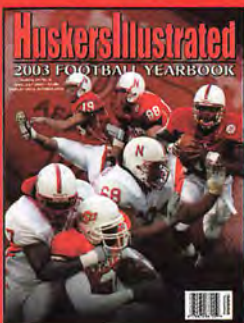
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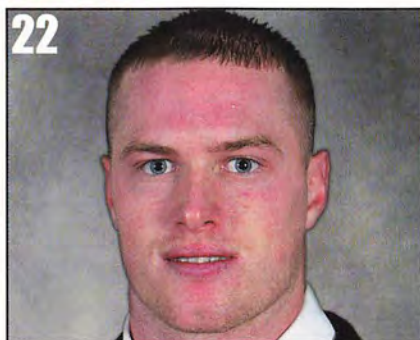
Each year, new senior leaders emerge for the Nebraska football team. This year's cover features five seniors. Pictured (clockwise from top left) are punter Kyle Larson, defensive end Trevor Johnson, quarterback Jammal Lord, offensive tackle Dan Vili Waldrop,

and linebacker Demorrio Williams. Cover art by Scott Bruhn; Bret McVey, Blaze Graphics.

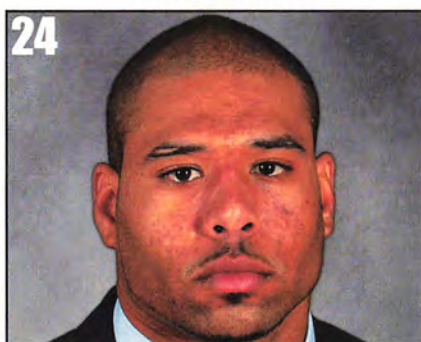
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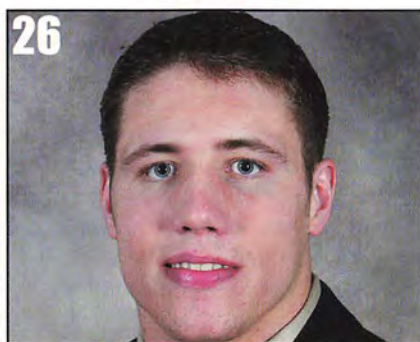
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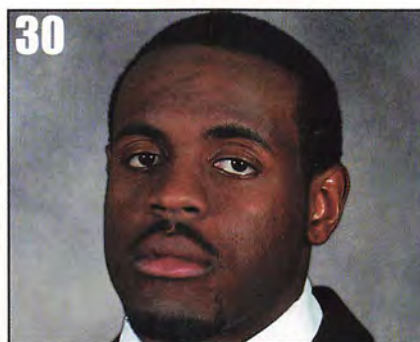
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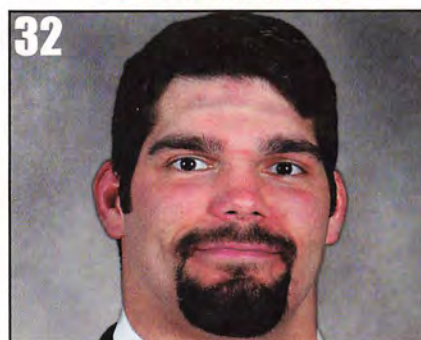
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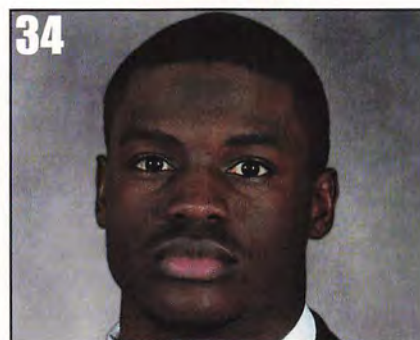
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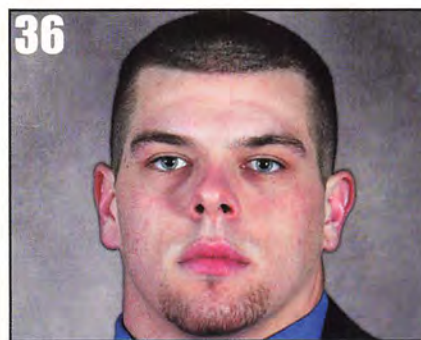
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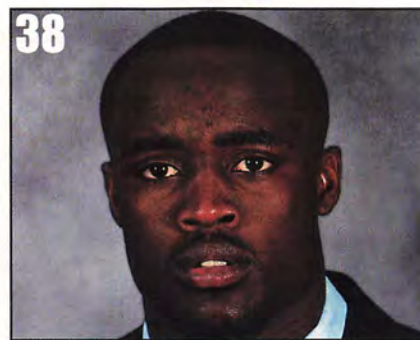
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Which Way Will It Go?

With new pieces in place, the Huskers will try to climb back toward the top



Brian Hill

OUR MAIN STORY in this edition a year ago carried the headline "Crossroads? 2002 Cornhuskers motivated by reports program is slipping."

The 7-7 season must have had the critics saying "I told you so."

Whether the 2002 season was a true indication of where the Nebraska program was at or an aberration, it was definitely time for a tuneup. Although some will disagree with the way the new pieces were put together, it's time to give it a chance and see how it looks.

Six new assistants are in place, including new offensive and defensive coordinators. Along with the revamped coaching staff come many other changes and modifications, including terminology. The familiar positions of wingback and split end will be replaced simply by wide receiver. Defensively,

Nebraska's three linebacker positions will be called Mike, Will and Buck, instead of Mike, Will and Sam. The rover position will be labeled strong safety, and the rush ends will be called defensive ends.

No matter what you call them, the Huskers need more play-makers or difference-makers. In at least four of the seven losses last season, the opponent probably had more big-play capability.

Penn State, which humbled Nebraska 40-7, had four players taken in the first round of the NFL Draft and two more in the second round. Nebraska's top draft pick was Chris Kelsay, a second-round selection. Cornerback DeJuan Groce was next in the fourth round. The Huskers have not had a first-round draft pick since Grant Wistrom and Jason Peter in 1998.

A look at the Associated Press 2002 All-Big 12 team shows Texas, Kansas State and Colorado each with four first-team picks.

No Nebraska players made the AP first team (Groce and place-kicker Josh Brown did make the Coaches' first team). The Huskers had four AP first-team selections in both 2000 and 2001.

Nebraska doesn't necessarily have to have consensus All-Americans, first-team all-conference selections or first-round draft picks to be successful, but it does need play-makers and leaders to step up, whether they be upperclassmen or newcomers.

Contributing editor Mike Babcock has profiles of 10 of Nebraska's seniors and a look at the contributions of true freshmen in this edition of Huskers Illustrated, our 2003 Football Yearbook.

As always, there's a wide assortment of stories, photos and information on the Huskers, including position-by-position breakdowns, capsules of top players and much, much more. We also have scouting reports on all the Big 12 teams and Nebraska's nonconference opponents.

With last season's plummet and the subsequent changes, it's extremely difficult to know what to expect in 2003. But four of the teams that defeated the Huskers must come to Lincoln this time around, beginning with Oklahoma State on Aug. 30.

This crystal ball forecasts a 9-4 season. That won't be good enough for everyone, but it certainly would be a step in the right direction. ■



NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of **Huskers Illustrated** (Volume 23, No. 7) will be mailed the week of Aug. 18. Check for updates at www.huskersillustrated.com.

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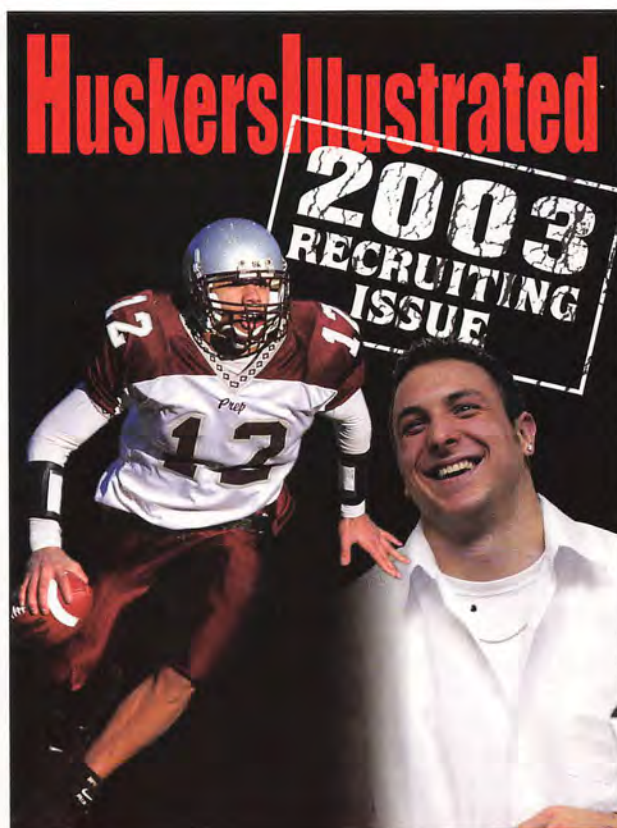
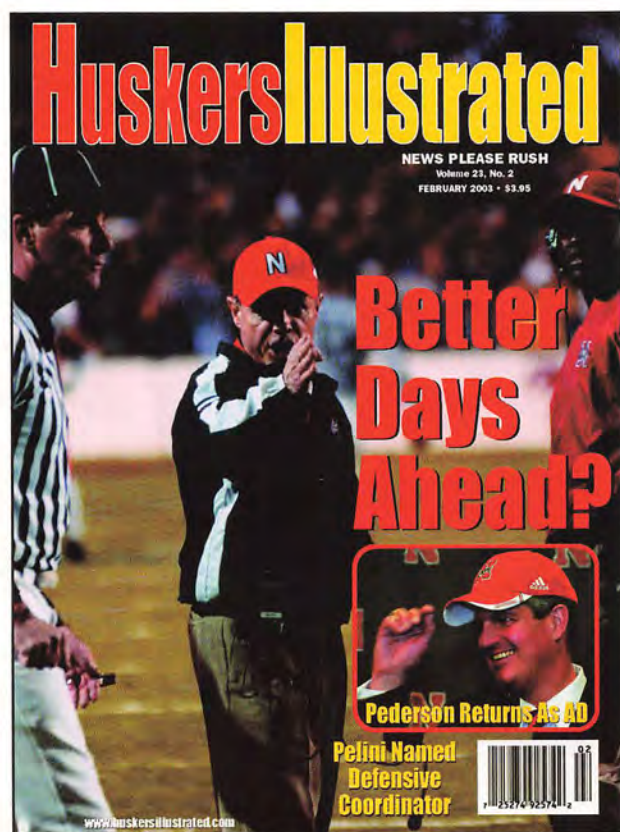
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... All The Time

'He's A Trooper'

Offensive lineman Loos learns what patience is during long recovery from knee injury



**Mike
BABCOCK**

COMPETITION FOR THE second-team, offensive right tackle job wasn't a particularly big story during spring practice. There's no need to explain why. The situation speaks for itself.

Suffice it to say, Dan Vili Waldrop, a two-year starter, wasn't likely to be unseated.

Nevertheless, that Chris Loos came away sharing the No. 2 job with redshirted freshman Jemayel Phillips, "Big Smooth," was a remarkable accomplishment, worthy of mention.

Without an obvious, and perhaps inexplicable, passion for football, combined with an extraordinary commitment to it, Loos would have ceased being a student-athlete long ago.

But "I've played this sport my whole life and I love it," he said the week after the Spring Game, trying to explain. "I love being out there. I love playing. That keeps you going."

Even so, he admitted, "It's pretty hard being out for two years."

"Pretty hard" doesn't do justice to the depth of frustration he felt.

The last time he played was in the Colorado game in 2000. He was a redshirted freshman, with a bright future. He had seen action primarily on the extra-point and field goal teams that first season, until Jon Rutherford was sidelined by a knee injury in the Kansas game.

In Rutherford's absence, he had moved up to second team at left tackle.

During teamwork in a practice at the Cook Pavilion prior to the Alamo Bowl game, going one-on-one, Loos was dropping back in pass protection. The rush end took a step inside, then jumped back to the outside. Loos reacted to follow. He was wearing grass cleats, and his left foot stuck.

"I knew right away it wasn't good," he said. "I could hear all the pops, three or four of them."

The pain was excruciating. "Then everything went numb," he said.

The injury included torn anterior cruciate and medial collateral ligaments, and the posterior collateral ligament had to be re-attached. He would need reconstructive surgery.

Then, after arthroscopic surgery to clean up the knee in May of 2001, Loos thought he would be able to play. He was running well, feeling good. But when he tried to practice, he realized something was still wrong with the knee, which would swell up, "a lot of nasty stuff," he said.

That led to more surgery, arthroscopic in October of 2001 and a second major surgery to reconstruct the PCL in January of 2002. For some athletes, one reconstructive sur-

gery would be enough. But Loos refused to concede. As long as there was a chance, however slim, he was going to try.

"I would get down, but I don't think I ever thought I wouldn't make it back," he said. "There were times where, 'If I had to do it right now, I couldn't.' But I always thought I would."

He got by with the support of his parents, his girlfriend and the coaches.

"There are so many things that help keep a person sane," he said. "You learn a lot of patience when something like this happens. I've always been kind of patient, but you don't know what patience is until you have to wait for something for two years. At first, I wanted to get back as fast as I could. Then it was like, 'You've got to wait. Your body is going to tell you when it's time.'"

Loos also faced the uncertainty of a new position coach. Former offensive line coach Milt Tenopir might have understood, but Barney Cotton, his successor, might not.

Any concerns Loos had about that were quickly dismissed, however. Soon after arriving, Cotton told him to keep working and they would "see how you do in the spring," said Loos. And, Cotton added, if he didn't feel comfortable in the spring, he still had the summer to get better.

Loos made it through every practice in the spring. His quickness wasn't where he expects it to be in the fall, and he needs to work on his leg strength. Plus, he needs to gain some

weight.

At between 280 and 285, he was about 20 pounds underweight and "that made a big difference, being out there with guys that are weighing a little bit more than me on the defensive side," he said.

"I could get places, but finishing things off was kind of hard."

But finishing off blocks or not, Cotton was impressed enough to put him second on the depth chart. Loos "hasn't missed a beat," Cotton said prior to the Spring Game.

"He's a trooper. He's been a little bit sore-legged, but every time they (trainers) talk about holding him out, he comes to me and says, 'You know, I think I'm all right. I'm going to go.' He's an extremely tough young man."

And, more to the point here, "he's somewhere in the back-up mix at tackle," said Cotton.

That might not seem like a big deal on the face of it, but it is for Loos. ■



**Chris Loos last played
in a game in 2000.**

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.



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Uneasy Feeling

Recent results, personnel changes make life nerve-racking, exciting



Curt McKEEVER

TWO YEARS AGO, questions about the future of Nebraska's football program arose only after two lopsided, season-ending losses to Colorado and Miami.

The Huskers' answer was a tumultuous and disappointing 7-7 campaign, its first non-winning one since 1961. A huge turnover in Frank Solich's coaching staff followed, which brought some temporary calm to the stormy situation.

But Solich knows the truth about the 2003 season: It just might be the most important in Nebraska history.

For Solich and the Husker nation, that makes life both nerve-racking and exciting. And with all the personnel changes, and the fact Nebraska kept things Plain Jane during a spring practice that was shrouded in secrecy, the uneasiness isn't likely to go away soon.

Although the Huskers sought to keep under wraps the major changes occurring under new defensive coordinator Bo Pelini and first-year offensive coordinator/line coach Barney Cotton, the Spring Game gave them reasons to believe improvement is on the way.

The Red squad, featuring the first- and second-string offenses, defeated the Whites 13-0, showing some variety and spunk in the process. The Whites featured the first- and second-string defenses. The first-unit defense stayed in one base front all day and employed only one form of blitz, from the outside.

"We're heading in the right direction," Pelini said. "We had a good spring. I feel good about the knowledge the guys have gained. We've progressed at a rapid pace."

NU lost three players from last year's defense to the NFL Draft — defensive end Chris Kelsay, cornerback DeJuan Groce and linebacker Scott Shanle. But spring provided some key developments at all of those spots.

With everyone healthy, Nebraska will have a solid, five-man rotation in the interior of the defensive line, with Le Kevin Smith, Seppo Ewvaraye, Ryon Bingham, Patrick Kabongo and Jason Lohr. Lohr has been granted a sixth season of eligibility after recovering from serious knee injuries the last two seasons.

At defensive end, Benard Thomas takes over the left side, and will get help from Titus Adams, who played mostly inside last season. Thomas, a junior, is coming off a redshirt season. "It looks to us like his decision to redshirt was a very good decision," Solich said.

Defensive end Adam Carriker, a 6-foot-6, 260-pound redshirt freshman, was one of the spring's biggest surprises, recording four sacks in the first two major scrimmages. "For someone who played quarterback in high school, to see Adam do some of the things he does, there's no doubt we're excited about it," defensive line coach Jeff Jamrog said. "He's someone we're going to have to count on next season to play some awful good football for us."

At defensive tackle, Smith bumped incumbent starter Patrick Kabongo for the No. 1 spot. Kabongo, who started over

the second half of last season, is listed as the top backup to Ryon Bingham at nose tackle. Solich, though, said Kabongo may move back and forth between the spots.

Smith, a 6-foot-2, 305-pounder from Macon, Ga., had 42 tackles in 14 games last season, playing both tackle spots. "He's showing up very strong at the line of scrimmage and has really improved his pass rush game from last year," Jamrog said. "That's probably the biggest step he's made."

Pelini offered consistent praise about linebackers Ira Cooper, a junior, and senior Chad Buller, a walk-on from Henderson, Neb. Of Cooper, Pelini said, "I see him as a guy who can probably play all three linebacker spots. He's done a nice job." The 5-11, 215-pound Buller adds depth at WILL linebacker, which becomes especially important if Lannie Hopkins is slow recovering from a recurring groin injury that required surgery this spring.

One of the keys for the Husker secondary will be to somehow avoid a dropoff at right corner, where Groce was dominating. In addition to Lornell McPherson and Pat Ricketts, among those expected to battle for the job come fall are junior Willie Amos, senior Terrell Butler and junior-college transfer Donald DeFrاند. Amos practiced this spring, but was limited as he recovers from major knee surgery. At the safety spots, four players — Josh Bullocks, Daniel Bullocks, Jerrell Pippens and Shane Siegel — battled for time this spring. Returning starter Philip Bland sat out the spring with an injured shoulder but will return in the fall.

Nebraska probably has more offensive concerns, including how to replace drafted place-kicker Josh Brown. But, as usual, the quarterback position is getting most of the attention.

After spring drills ended, Garth Glissman, a 6-6 walk-on from Waverly, Neb., listed No. 4 on the depth chart, transferred to Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College. And Curt Dukes, tied with Mike Stuntz as the backup to Jammal Lord, was considering a move to another program. That could give Joe Dailey, a scholarship player from Jersey City, N.J., a chance to make an impact as a true freshman. It should be noted, though, that in the last 18 years, only two true freshmen quarterbacks — Steve Taylor in 1985 and Tommie Frazier in 1992 — have seen action.

Lord has virtually no challengers, but will have to greatly improve his passing efficiency. The senior was limited toward the end of spring practice by a pulled leg muscle.

When Nebraska gathers for practice in August, it'll have a different routine, as the NCAA's management council banned the common practice of conducting multiple practices on consecutive days. Nebraska will go to a 2-1-2-1 system.

Another new NCAA restriction prevents freshmen from reporting early for summer practice. They will now report with the entire varsity.

After last season, the Huskers should welcome change. ■



Bo Pelini's defense "is heading in the right direction."

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

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Spring Fling

Solich pleased with how pieces fit together heading into fall camp



Terry DOUGLASS

NEBRASKA COACH FRANK SOLICH apparently likes the way his new-look coaching staff is rounding into shape heading into the crucial 2003 season.

Coming off a 7-7 campaign — the Cornhuskers' worst mark in four decades — Solich brought in six new assistant coaches, including two new coordinators, in hopes of injecting some life into the program.

"I thought they meshed together extremely well," Solich said after completing the spring practice season.

"I think the players took to the staff, and the attitude and effort has been great as far as our players are concerned."

With just 15 practices allowed in the four-week spring session, the players still have plenty to learn about the new systems installed by offensive coordinator Barney Cotton and defensive coordinator Bo Pelini. Fall camp will be critical.

Solich, who served as his own offensive coordinator in his first five seasons as head coach, has handed the play-calling duties off to Cotton — a move most believe will give the offense a new look. As offensive coordinator at New Mexico State, Cotton exhibited more of a penchant for the passing game and especially liked to throw on first down.

"I like what Barney is doing in designing the offense," said Solich, who watched the Red and White combine for 47 pass attempts in the Spring Game. "I really like what he's done in terms of our offensive line and how far he's brought the line in a short period of time and how much better of a pass (protection) team we are."

Perhaps wanting to downplay unrealistic summertime talk that Nebraska will be throwing the ball all over the place this fall, Solich has since taken some air out of the sails of the pass-happy crowd.

"On the offensive side, we won't steer too much from what we've been doing," said Solich, whose team attempted passes on 24.5 percent of its offensive plays in 2002. "I think Barney will throw the ball a little more, and I think we'll run maybe a little less option, but we'll still be an option attack, and we'll try to base it off of some other things we're trying to get accomplished offensively."

Following the Spring Game, Cotton noted that the percentage of passes thrown in the Red-White scrimmage shouldn't be used as a guideline for the upcoming season.

"We will probably be about a 2-to-1 or 60-40 running team," Cotton said. "The big thing with us is that, hopefully, defenses will realize that when they play against us we're going to attack them and make them defend the whole football field and be a little bit unpredictable."

"We don't ever just want to get in a rhythm, unless something is really working, to make a defense think that we're one-dimensional. We'd like to be two-dimensional all season long."

It seems unlikely Nebraska will develop into a 50-50 run-pass team anytime soon. Returning starting quarterback Jammal Lord was a 47-percent passer last year, with 12 interceptions, and no other quarterback in the system has significant experience.

Instead, Solich and Cotton are looking to put Lord in situations where he's more likely to taste success. Calling for shorter, more high-percentage throws and first-down passes when the defense is expecting the run are just a couple of the things they think can help Lord improve his passing.

"We worked on the throwing game in spring ball exceptionally hard," Solich said. "We feel like we have a good group of receivers."

"We want to develop a passing game where Jammal could get some confidence."

Solich also likes the looks of the new Pelini-sculpted defense. However, details of exactly how the Blackshirts will line up are being kept hush-hush in hopes of keeping Oklahoma State guessing for the Aug. 30 opener in Lincoln.

"Without going into Xs and Os and schemes and so forth, the one thing I've been impressed with about Bo Pelini and his defensive staff is that they're great, great teachers," Solich said. "We are going to be very good in terms of our technique, and we're going to be very good in terms of knowing our assignments. I think that frees your players up to play with the kind of ability that they have."

For Nebraska's defensive units, the spring practice season might best be described as fast and furious, as Pelini and his players scrambled to get to know each other as well as the new defensive system the Huskers will employ next season.

But after the Red-White game, Pelini said he was pleased with the defense's progress.

"We're heading in the right direction," he said. "Things are going good. We're just going to keep progressing. Obviously, we have a lot of work to do between now and even before those 29 practices start in the fall."

"I feel good about where we are right now, but we've got a ways to go before we play that first game."

Nebraska returns nine players with starting experience and 25 letterwinners on defense. Although the Huskers allowed an uncharacteristically high 23.9 points and 361.9 yards of offense per game last season, Pelini believes the defense possesses the talent to improve this fall.

"I've learned a lot about the players — the same way they've been learning about us," Pelini said. "We have some good athletes . . . enough to get it done . . . enough to play good defense."

Pelini, who was the linebacker coach for the NFL's Green Bay Packers before coming to Nebraska in December, said he's been impressed with how quickly the Huskers have learned the new terminology and concepts.

"A lot of the things we put in, they've never been exposed to conceptually," Pelini said. "In the run game and the pass game, they're hearing a lot of new terms. There was a lot for these guys to take in, and I saw progress from the first day to the last."

"That's why I feel good about where we are right now." ■



Barney Cotton wants the offense to be less predictable.

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the *Grand Island Independent*. He can be reached at tdbdouglass@netzero.net.

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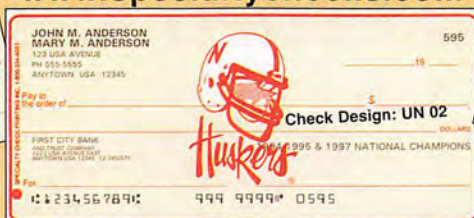
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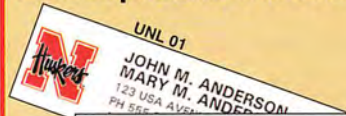
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7-7



*Offseason reminders
serve to strengthen
resolve . . . if it really
needed strengthening*

By Mike Babcock
Photos by Scott Bruhn

Frank Solich At A Glance

Year	Big 12		All	
	W	L	W	L
1998	5	3	9	4
1999	7	1	12	1
2000	6	2	10	2
2001	7	1	11	2
2002	3	5	7	7
Totals	28	12	49	16

The plan was to get away, however briefly, to set aside the season, take a ski trip to Wyoming and relax before the start of second-semester classes at the university, Pat Ricketts said.

The group included a couple of teammates and some high school friends.

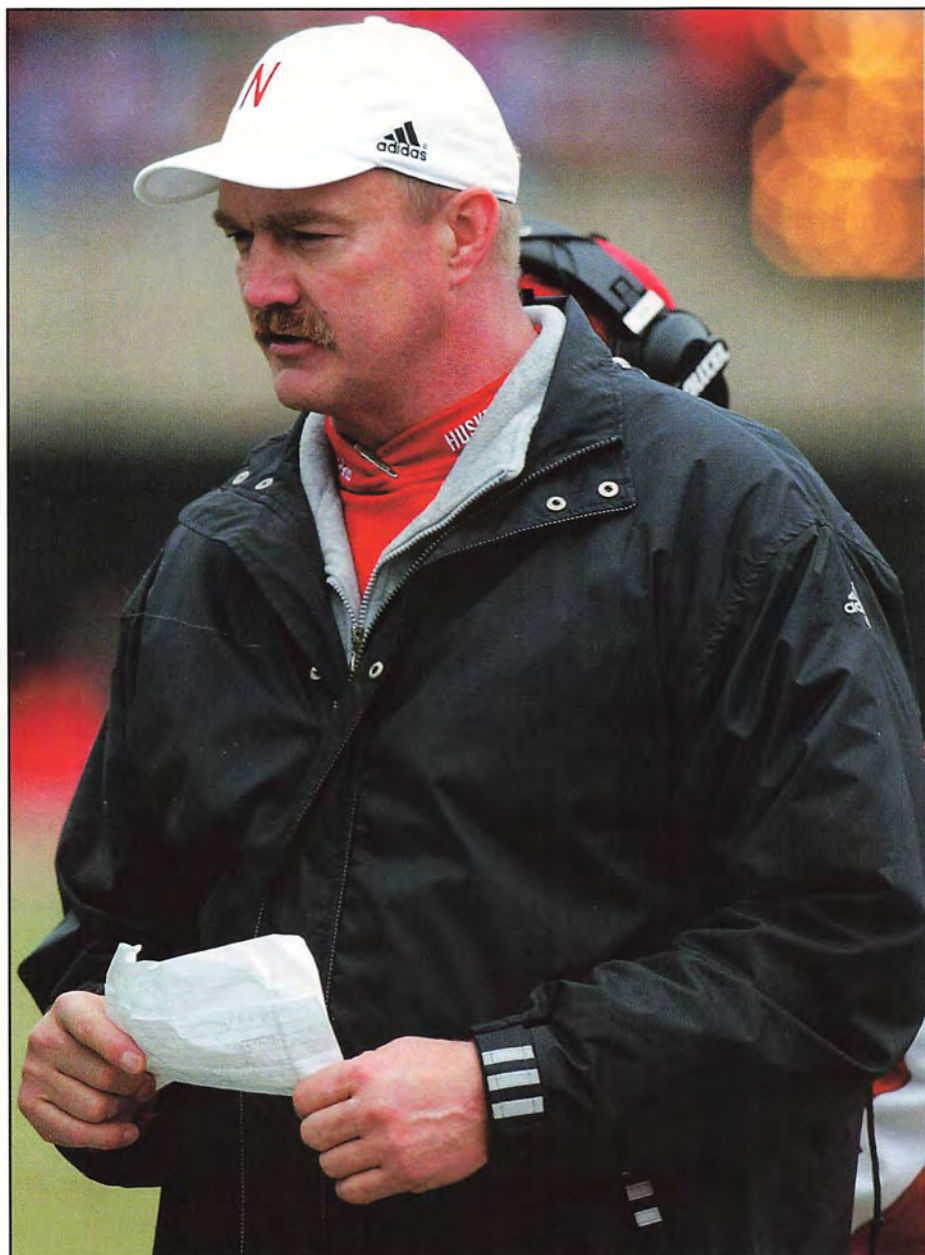
But there was no escaping talk of Nebraska's 7-7 record, not even in Jackson Hole, Wyo., where strangers on the ski lifts, students from other schools on break, would raise the issue.

As soon as someone found out Ricketts' group was from Nebraska, though not necessarily that it included Cornhusker football players, the 7-7 record became a topic of discussion.

"The first thing they'd say was, 'Oh, sorry about the football season,'" said Ricketts. "They talked about how bad we did. They thought they knew more. It was kind of tough to bite."

The experience served to strengthen a resolve that didn't really need

apping



Nebraska Coach Frank Solich handed over the offensive coordinator duties to ex-Husker Barney Cotton (above), while former NFL assistant Bo Pelini (right) was hired as defensive coordinator.

strengthening.

It "got me going again, 'All right, we've got to do this right, get it back, because that's all they know, that's all they think about Nebraska. We're

representing the state,'" he said.

The tremors set off by the Cornhuskers' worst season in 40 years could be felt in the East as well.

"I don't care where you're at,



"What we do want to accomplish is to have him become a more efficient passer. We want him to move up into the 55 to 60 percent range as far as pass completions, so we tried to build our throwing offense around that a little bit this spring to get him a chance at some easier throws."

— **Frank Solich on senior quarterback Jammal Lord**



Nebraska has alumni everywhere, people who are big fans, from west Philly to Timbuktu, wherever you go," said Jerrell Pippens, who is from west Philadelphia.

In the aftermath of the Cornhuskers' loss to Mississippi in the Independence Bowl, "you couldn't watch a college football show without hearing criticism," Pippens said.

"And then, of course, you hear it locally, socially."

Even now, "everybody wants to talk about it," said Trevor Johnson.

"There's a lot of motivation coming out of a 7-7 season. You've got a fierce desire, you want to get things back. Playing football here, usually you don't need things like that to increase your desire to win."

The desire wasn't lacking. Most players would agree. But something was missing in a season that began with enough promise to prove those who forecast a slide to be wrong.

Though some regarded Nebraska's late-season defensive collapse in 2001 as a sign of things to come, the Cornhuskers went in ranked No. 10 nationally and climbed to No. 8 before traveling to Penn State.

Lopsided losses there and two weeks later at Iowa State dropped them from the polls.

By season's end, they would be embarrassed at Kansas State (49-13), lose four of their final five games and

be as far from a national ranking as any Cornhusker team since 1968.

Every program is bound to slide. But Nebraska didn't just slide. It plummeted from the national scene. "I would have never thought we'd go 7-7," said Ricketts, who walked on.

"That was one of the reasons I came here. Having a season like that, you've got to take a step back, think where you've been, take it in but then know where you need to get to get the program back, make sure high school kids say, 'I want to go to

Top Three Returning Rushers

Player	Att.	Yds.	TD
Jammal Lord	251	1,412	8
David Horne	127	651	7
Judd Davies	42	193	4

Top Three Returning Receivers

Player	No.	Yds.	TD
Ross Pilkington	14	301	1
Josh Davis	10	58	0
Matt Herian	7	301	4

Nebraska, a top program in the nation.' "

Not everyone has taken the road back. The staff has been restructured, with six new assistants and both coordinators — Coach Frank Solich has given up control of the offense.

And a new athletic director, Steve Pederson, is in place.

The offense is expected to be a little more balanced between run and pass. The defense is expected to be less complicated and more aggressive. And no one is looking too far down the road.

"We're not going to worry about Penn State. We're not going to worry about Texas. Right now, we're going to focus on Oklahoma State, start off with them," T.J. Hollowell said.

"We're going to take it game by game. We can't think about people that beat us (last season). We're going to take it game by game and play hard. We've got to make plays, especially the seniors. We've got to lead this program back to where it started, get the records and everything back.

"We can't think about people that beat us (last season). We're going to take it game by game and play hard. We've got to make plays, especially the seniors. We've got to lead this program back to where it started, get the records and everything back."

— Senior linebacker T.J. Hollowell

"We've got to bring back the Blackshirt defense."

Bo Pelini, linebackers coach for the Green Bay Packers the last three seasons, has accepted that responsibility, implementing a system about which little has been revealed.

The less Nebraska's early opponents know, the better, Solich has explained.

In general terms, however, "we're going to be very good in terms of our technique, and we're going to be very good in terms of knowing our

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assignments," he said during the Big 12 coaches' post-spring teleconference. "I think that frees your players up to play with the kind of ability they have."

"We're going to be a team that finishes plays off extremely, extremely well."

Hollowell is among 17 defensive players with at least one start last season, alternating with Demorrio Williams at weakside linebacker. Now, Hollowell is playing on the other side, the Buck.

Depending on the standard, five defensive starters return. In addition to Williams (11 starts), they are middle linebacker Barrett Ruud (14), nose tackle Ryon Bingham (14),

strong safety Philip Bland (13), who was held out of spring practice, and cornerback Fabian Washington (11).

"You think about it, but there's always going to be change in your life . . . I guess what you do when change happens is, you can go with it or try to live in the past."

— Senior cornerback Pat Ricketts on the changes in the coaching staff

But Johnson, a defensive end, started nine games, Ricketts, a cornerback, started eight and Patrick Kabongo, who spent a majority of the spring at nose tackle, started seven.

In addition, Willie Amos, a cornerback now, was a starter at free safety two seasons ago before a severe knee injury, as was nose tackle Jason Lohr, who also was sidelined by a knee injury.

With everyone healthy, the defense has depth and experience at nearly every position. And it has a hard edge that seemed to be lacking at times last season, according to Hollowell.

"I feel like the attitude can't be nice," he said. "You've got to get dirty. You've got to let people know you've got to get your (butt) to the ball. You can't say, 'Come on, man, run to the ball.' They know from day one you've got to run to the ball. You can't baby them. Those days are over."

"That's why we were 7-7. 'Man, don't holler at him.' You've got to get it done."

Hollowell intends to be vocal about such things. And "if I make a mistake, I want them to chew me out. 'This is how it's going to be.' Nothing personal, it's got to be that way."

Even though he has turned over the offense to Barney Cotton, it is likely to look familiar. "We won't steer too much from what we've been doing," Solich said. Cotton is inclined to "throw the ball a little more, and I think we'll run, maybe, a little less option. But we'll still be an option attack."

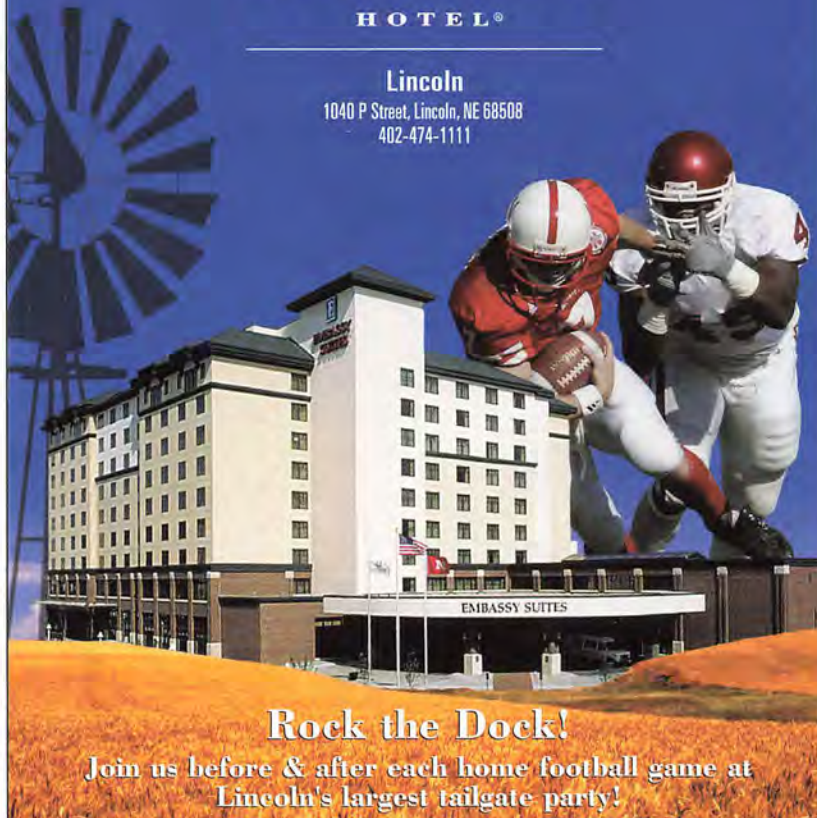
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accomplished offensively."

Quarterback Jammal Lord is the central figure in that. Though a senior, he has had only one season of experience. That year's experience "should be extremely beneficial," said Solich.

"If you look at quarterbacks that had poor years, if they're talented athletes, they're able to survive that poor year and rebound and be much, much better the next go-around."

Lord's junior season could hardly be considered "poor," at least in its entirety. He broke the school single-season record for quarterbacks, rushing for 1,412 yards, broke the single-season record for total offense with 2,774 yards and earned coaches' all-conference honorable mention.

He completed only 46.8 percent of his passes, however, with as many interceptions as touchdowns, and that's an area in which he must improve if Cotton's system is to be effective.

"He's a great runner; that was obvious," Solich said. "You don't break Eric Crouch's rushing record in a season without having great running skill and ability. Jammal certainly has all that.

"What we do want to accomplish is to have him become a more efficient passer. We want him to move up into the 55 to 60 percent range as far as pass completions, so we tried to build our throwing offense around that a little bit this spring to get him a chance at some easier throws."

The adjustments in the spring "seemed to play out well for us," said Solich.

The responsibility isn't all Lord's, though. The line needs to protect him.

Lord's continued good health would be a concern anyway, but it's even more important given the fact

that junior Mike Stuntz and incoming freshman Joe Dailey will be his only scholarship back-ups.

Curt Dukes, who bypassed his final semester of high school to begin at Nebraska, announced in late May that he was transferring, after what seemed a frustrating redshirt season.

I-back Marques Simmons, another highly regarded recruit, also decided to leave the program following spring practice. Not everyone stuck around to help get the team back on track.

In any case, Solich said that he was pleased with "how far" Cotton had "brought the line in a short peri-

Top Three Returning Tacklers

Player	UT	AT	TT
Demorrio Williams	38	54	92
Barrett Ruud	36	55	91
Philip Bland	44	40	84

Top Three Returning in Tackles for Loss

Player	No.	Yds.
Barrett Ruud	12	36
Trevor Johnson	11	40
Patrick Kabongo	9	25
Ryon Bingham	9	18

Top Three Returning in Sacks

Player	No.	Yds.
Trevor Johnson	3.5	25
Lannie Hopkins	2.5	19
Patrick Kabongo	2	17
Barrett Ruud	2	17
Titus Adams	2	17

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od of time" in the spring and "how much better of a pass (protection) team we are."

The line includes three of five returning starters on offense: tackles Richie Incognito, one of 36 on the Outland Trophy watch list, and Dan Vili Waldrop and guard Mike Erickson.

Fullback Judd Davies is the other returning starter.

Punter Kyle Larson returns, after averaging 43.23 yards on 73 punts last season to earn second-team All-Big 12 recognition from the conference coaches, but the place-kicking is unsettled.

"We've got some challenges ahead, but we're looking forward to them," Solich said.

"Fall camp is going to be critical for us, of course, to be on the same page and to make sure that we're ready to go for our opening ball game," against Oklahoma State on Aug. 30 at Memorial Stadium.

The Cowboys beat Nebraska last season for the first time since 1961.

The changes haven't been easy. Ricketts is among those with new position coaches.

George Darlington, Ricketts' former position coach, had been at Nebraska since 1973. He was among the first to be hired by Tom Osborne. "Growing up in Nebraska, those are the coaches you know," Ricketts said. "You think about it, but there's always going to be change in your life.

"I guess what you do when change happens is, you can go with it or try to live in the past."

Darlington and the other coaches who were replaced — including Milt Tenopir and Dan Young, both of whom retired — "definitely put in their time," he said. "They helped build Nebraska and make Nebraska what it is. But these new coaches are going to get a shot at doing the same thing."

Nebraska is still a football power, said Ricketts. Last season was an aberration.

Listening to strangers in Wyoming discuss the Cornhuskers' shortcomings was difficult. "I'm kind of glad we weren't in Colorado," Ricketts said. "There probably would have been more talk." ■



HUSKERS AT A GLANCE

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2003 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30	Oklahoma State	TBA
Sept. 6	Utah State	TBA
Sept. 13	Penn State	TBA
Sept. 25	@ Southern Miss (ESPN)6:30 p.m.	
Oct. 4	Troy State	TBA
Oct. 11	@ Missouri	TBA
Oct. 18	Texas A&M (Homecoming)	TBA
Oct. 25	Iowa State	TBA
Nov. 1	@ Texas	TBA
Nov. 8	@ Kansas	TBA
Nov. 15	Kansas State	TBA
Nov. 28	@ Colorado (ABC)	11 a.m.

(Times are subject to change and are Central)

POST SPRING DEPTH CHART

WR	2	Ross Pilkington*	6-0	190	So.		LDE	10	Benard Thomas**	6-4	265	Jr.
	13	Tim Liley*	6-2	205	Sr.			96	Titus Adams*	6-3	290	So.
	25	Kade Pittman	5-11	200	Fr.			93	Tyler Toline	6-2	240	Jr.
	84	Grant Mulkey	5-11	185	RFr.		or	44	Jay Moore	6-4	285	RFr.
	20	Kiffin Wigert	5-9	160	Jr.		NT	59	RYON BINGHAM**	6-3	290	Sr.
	8	Ryan Ommert	5-10	195	Sr.			94	PATRICK KABONGO***	6-6	320	Sr.
LT	51	RICHE INCIGNITO*	6-3	300	So.			73	Jared Helming	6-3	290	So.
	69	Nick Povendo*	6-3	300	Jr.		or	99	Brandon Greeson	6-3	315	RFr.
	54	Gary Pike	6-4	320	So.		DT	66	Le Kevin Smith*	6-2	305	So.
	57	Cory Timm	6-4	325	RFr.			97	Seppo Ewvaraye*	6-5	320	So.
LG	78	MIKE ERICKSON**	6-4	305	Jr.			95	Nathan Krug	6-4	245	So.
	71	Jake Andersen*	6-1	300	Jr.		RDE	88	TREVOR JOHNSON***	6-4	255	Sr.
	54	Carson Schott	6-2	320	So.			90	Adam Carrier	6-6	260	RFr.
C	79	Josh Sewell*	6-2	300	Sr.			50	Jeff McBride	6-4	245	Jr.
	64	Kurt Mann	6-3	290	RFr.		BLB	2	T.J. Hollowell***	6-0	230	Sr.
	63	Jack Limbaugh	6-4	285	Jr.			11	Ira Cooper**	6-2	230	Jr.
RG	55	Junior Tagofai**	6-2	300	Sr.		or	40	Lannie Hopkins*	6-2	220	Jr.
	75	Brandon Koch	6-3	310	So.			54	Chad Sievers*	6-3	230	Jr.
	72	Tim Green	6-4	325	Sr.		MLB	38	BARRETT RUUD**	6-2	240	Jr.
	61	Brian Nelson	6-4	320	Sr.			11	Ira Cooper**	6-2	230	Jr.
RT	68	DAN VILI WALDROP***	6-5	350	Sr.		or	42	Steve Safranek**	6-1	240	Jr.
	76	Chris Loos**	6-3	290	Sr.			6	Stewart Bradley	6-4	260	RFr.
	77	Jamaye Phillips	6-6	365	RFr.		WLB	7	DEMORRIO WILLIAMS*	6-1	210	Sr.
	53	Cody Volk	6-7	325	Sr.			40	Lannie Hopkins*	6-2	220	Jr.
TE	11	Matt Herian*	6-5	240	So.			39	Chad Buller*	5-11	215	Sr.
	82	Phil Peetz**	6-2	270	Sr.		LCB	3	FABIAN WASHINGTON*	5-11	175	So.
	83	Chris Septak	6-3	255	Jr.			4	Terrell Butler*	5-10	190	Sr.
	47	Dusty Keiser	6-3	240	Jr.			8	Andrew Shanley	6-1	200	RFr.
	80	Alex Shada	6-3	245	Jr.		FS	20	JOSH BULLOCKS*	6-1	195	So.
QB	10	JAMMAL LORD***	6-2	220	Sr.			31	Jerrall Pippens***	6-2	195	Sr.
	16	Mike Stuntz**	6-1	200	Jr.			36	Dan Burrow	5-10	185	Jr.
	11	Brett Lindstrom	6-0	190	Sr.		SS	14	Daniel Bullocks*	6-1	200	So.
FB	4	JUDD DAVIES***	6-0	250	Sr.			23	Shane Siegel*	6-2	220	So.
	6	DeAntae Grixhy**	5-8	215	Sr.			25	Blake Tiedtke	5-10	195	So.
	45	Steve Kriewald**	5-10	250	Jr.		RCB	1	Lornell McPherson**	5-9	175	Jr.
	41	Dane Todd	5-10	235	RFr.			28	PAT RICKETTS***	5-11	180	Sr.
	34	Andy Wingender	5-10	250	Sr.			27	Willie Amos**	6-0	185	Jr.
	30	Grant Miller	6-0	225	RFr.			29	Kellen Huston	5-11	200	Jr.
IB	9	David Horne*	6-0	190	So.							
	2	Josh Davis**	5-11	205	Sr.							
	21	Robin Miller**	5-11	230	Sr.							
WR	24	Jack O'Holleran	5-10	205	Jr.							
	10	Mark LeFlore*	5-11	185	So.							
	3	Ben Zajicek*	6-0	210	Jr.							
	18	Mike McLaughlin	5-11	180	So.							
	28	Isiah Fluellen	6-0	185	RFr.							

2002 RECORD: 7-7
CONFERENCE RECORD: 3-5

A 24	Arizona State	W, 48-10
A 31	Troy State	W, 31-16
S 7	Utah State	W, 44-13
S 14	@ Penn State	L, 40-7
S 28	@ Iowa State	L, 36-14
O 5	McNeese State	W, 38-14
O 12	Missouri	W, 24-13
O 19	@ Oklahoma St.	L, 24-21
O 26	@ Texas A&M	W, 38-31
N 2	Texas	L, 27-24
N 9	Kansas	W, 45-7
N 16	@ Kansas State	L, 49-13
N 29	Colorado	L, 28-13
D 27	Mississippi	L, 27-23

& Independence Bowl, Shreveport, La.

Scouting reports for other Big 12 schools begin on Page 76

NOTES

— Returning lettermen in bold

— Returning starters in CAPS

— * Letters earned

KICKERS

P	19	KYLE LARSON**	6-0	205	Sr.
	37	Sam Koch	6-1	230	So.
PK	22	Sandro DeAngelis*	5-8	190	Jr.
	32	Dale Endorf	6-0	210	Sr.

INJURED

Offense

TE	46	John Knopp	6-3	245	So.
OG	66	Jermaine Leslie	6-1	315	RFr.

Defense

DT/NT	70	Jason Lohr***	6-2	285	Sr.
SS	21	PHILIP BLAND**	5-11	205	Jr.

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Moving Forward

During his three seasons at Nebraska, Judd Davies has carried the football an even 100 times, which facilitates figuring his career-rushing average, 6.14 yards-per-carry.

He has been tackled for lost yardage on only three of those 100 carries, the sort of statistic one might expect from a fullback — and one that could characterize Davies' personality. The senior from Omaha seems inclined to move forward, in his attitude as well as in his play.

Some might consider last season's 7-7 record a reflection of a lack of dedication on the part of the team, for example. But not Davies. "I tend to believe every spring ball, every winter conditioning, guys are working as hard as they possibly can," he said following a practice this spring.

"I feel like everybody worked hard last winter conditioning, that last spring ball, guys were focused and wanted to get the job done." And the same was true this off-season and spring.

The older guys, the veterans, might have been a little more focused, out of necessity, with new offensive and defensive coordinators in place. "In the past, you might be able to cruise a little bit because you already knew everything," said Davies. "You knew the plays."

But don't misinterpret those words. "I don't think guys were cruising in the past," he said. "The focus never changed. I'm simply saying, I have to think (now), 'What's the play call? What's my assignment? What does this play mean to me?' In the past, you could overlook that stuff."

"You could get to the huddle and it could slip your mind because you got in such a routine. Now you're really having to ask yourself, 'Where do I line up? What play is this?'"

That wasn't an excuse for making mistakes in spring practice. Rather, it was simply a description of one of many factors involved in the transition to a new way of doing things.

Davies isn't one for making excuses, anyway, nor has he been eager to try to explain how a season that held such promise could have ended at 7-7, the Cornhuskers' worst record in 40 years.

It's reasonable to assume that he has given the subject some thought.

"He's a deep thinker, very smart," said senior cornerback Pat Ricketts, who has been Davies' friend and teammate since Millard North High School. "He's a very smart kid."

Ricketts' opinion is supported by irrefutable fact. Davies is a three-time, first-team academic all-conference and two-time academic all-district honoree. His major is communication studies, so he can certainly express himself. And his cumulative grade-point average is nearly perfect.

He could provide insight into what went wrong last season. But "I don't think I know enough about football

to say what goes wrong," he said. "I play one position and I watch film, but not a tenth or a fiftieth of what the coaches do. I have pretty limited exposure. It's the coaches' job."

Pressed on the matter, he reluctantly offered an opinion, then immediately qualified it. "On the whole, I don't know much more about it than you guys do," he said, referring to writers.

(Obviously, he was giving credit where it wasn't due.)

In any case, "I'd say we probably weren't very good in the red zone, not very good at finishing drives," he said. "Those are things I'd like to see us do better this year."

Nebraska was eighth in the conference in red zone offense in 2002, converting 34-of-43 possessions (79.1 percent) into points, 25 touchdowns and nine field goals — on 11 attempts.

The red-zone touchdowns were the second-fewest behind Baylor's 19.

The Cornhuskers also ranked 10th in the conference in third-down conversions (36.3 percent) and 11th in fourth-down conversions (40.9), a factor in their inability to keep drives alive.

"We went into lapses," said Davies. "We'd go two or three drives three-and-out and then all of a sudden the other team's on top of you. We had a hard time playing from behind. I've never been on a team that played from behind, and that was a new challenge for me and for the rest of the guys. So maybe we learned a little bit, developed some resiliency, toughened up our skin a little bit."

The fullback's role might be a little different in Cotton's system, though it was difficult to tell during the spring because the offense was kept under wraps, for what should be obvious reasons.

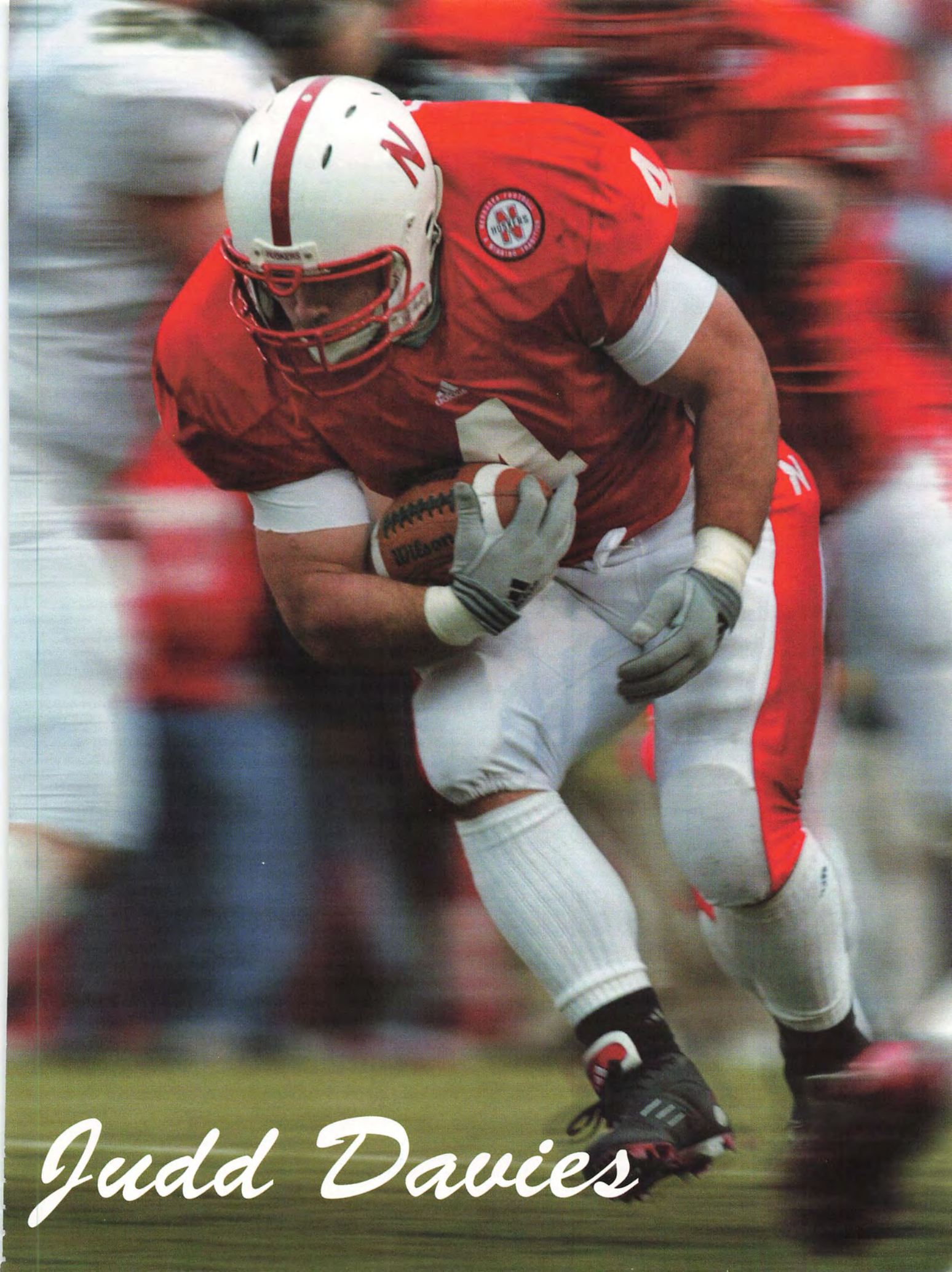
Davies acknowledged that Cotton talked to him "briefly" about the possibility of carrying the ball more, and "it would be fun if that happened," he said. "It's always fun to get the ball more. But if it doesn't happen, then I'll continue to do the same things I've always done."

"I block the vast majority of the time, and I don't expect anything (different), really. After being here long enough, it's probably not good to get too high of expectations."

Cotton did open the spring game with a pass from Jammal Lord to Davies.

But "I've tried to keep pretty level-headed," said Davies. "There's no reason to worry about how many touches you're getting and how many times you have to block. If you kept track of that, you'd be miserable if you wanted to carry the ball all the time. So I don't have any expectations. If he tells me he wants to try me carrying the ball more, then I'm all for it. If not, I'll do my role."

Either way, he'll be moving forward. That's been the pattern for three seasons. ■



Judd Davies

Four Years Later

Shaun Coleman and Josh Davis were roommates as freshmen in 1999. They had gotten to know each other during the summer, after arriving on campus early to begin working out.

They were both from Colorado, Coleman from Littleton, Davis from Loveland. And they helped each other get through a difficult redshirt season, sharing a room in Harper Hall.

Looking back, the room seems small, "especially for two big football players," Davis said recently. "Now, if they made us move back into the dorms, I don't know if I could do it."

The senior I-back and kick returner smiled at the recollection.

"It was too small of a space," he said.

Coleman was a prep All-American at Regis Jesuit High School, a linebacker recruited by Notre Dame, Southern California, Arizona and Northwestern.

He also was among the nation's top high school baseball prospects.

"I think every single person in the recruiting class was a superstar at their school, in their region," said Davis, a SuperPrep All-American. "There were a lot of good athletes."

The scholarship class included 18 freshmen besides him and Coleman, and they established friendships quickly during the shared adversity of two-a-day practices.

Defensive backs Rob Blomeier from Lititz, Pa., and Taylor Gehman from Omaha were among the first with whom he became acquainted, and they "hung out a lot," he said.

Davis is the only one of the four still playing. Injuries ended the careers of the others.

Coleman never really got started because of a nerve condition in his right hand and had returned home by his second year. Gehman, who played as a true freshman, and Blomeier remained in school and spent some time as undergraduate assistants. "I still see them on campus," Davis said.

He and Blomeier were in a couple of the same classes during the spring semester.

Such are the odds that even the best athletes face. "You were told in high school (that) only so many people would go on and finish, whether it had to do with injuries or whatever," said Davis.

Five others in the 1999 recruiting class won't complete their eligibility at Nebraska, and only one by choice. Tionu Fonoti left by way of the NFL draft following his junior season.

Blanchard Johnson was sidelined by injury, while Spencer Owen and Jon Dawson left the program, as did Larry Henderson, the only junior college transfer in the class.

"So I guess I feel lucky in that aspect," Davis said.

Not that he has played four years injury-free. His second season, during an October practice, he suffered a torn left anterior cruciate ligament, which required surgery.

He was able to come back, however, and contribute as

a back-up I-back and No. 1 kickoff returner. He has already rewritten the kickoff return section of the school record book. Last season, he returned 42 for 994 yards, both records, and broke the career record for yardage, 1,669.

His 23.7-yards-per-return average ranked 33rd in the nation.

In addition to increasing his career-record total, he might return punts this season. "I think the coaches are still evaluating that," he said. But he is among the candidates to replace DeJuan Groce.

He also is among the candidates to replace Dahrrian Diedrick at I-back, finishing the spring tied with sophomore Cory Ross for second on the depth chart, behind sophomore David Horne.

Davis was impressive at Loveland High, rushing for 1,422 yards and 21 touchdowns as a senior. He led the state's large-schools classification in scoring and ranked seventh in rushing.

In addition, he caught 25 passes for 595 yards and two touchdowns, numbers that contributed to a brief look at wingback during two-a-days prior to his freshman season at Nebraska.

He also had a short stint at rover after coming back from the knee injury. But I-back is his preference, and he would seem to fit the system of new offensive coordinator Barney Cotton.

"I think Coach Cotton feels a lot more comfortable as far as passing in different situations," he said. "It seems like in the past, we liked to stretch the field more. I don't want to give anything away, but this year we're trying to do short passes and have the athlete run with the ball."

Despite seeing limited action at I-back last season — he carried 25 times for 162 yards and one touchdown — he was third on the team in pass receptions, with 10 for 58 yards.

He is a much smarter runner than when he came to Nebraska. Time watching film has been well spent. "You're watching film non-stop," he said. "More than anything, it's mental reps."

Watching film in high school isn't the same, and not just because of the significantly less amount. "Early on in high school (it's like) you're watching TV," he said.

"It's kind of cool, for a lot of guys, just to see themselves on film."

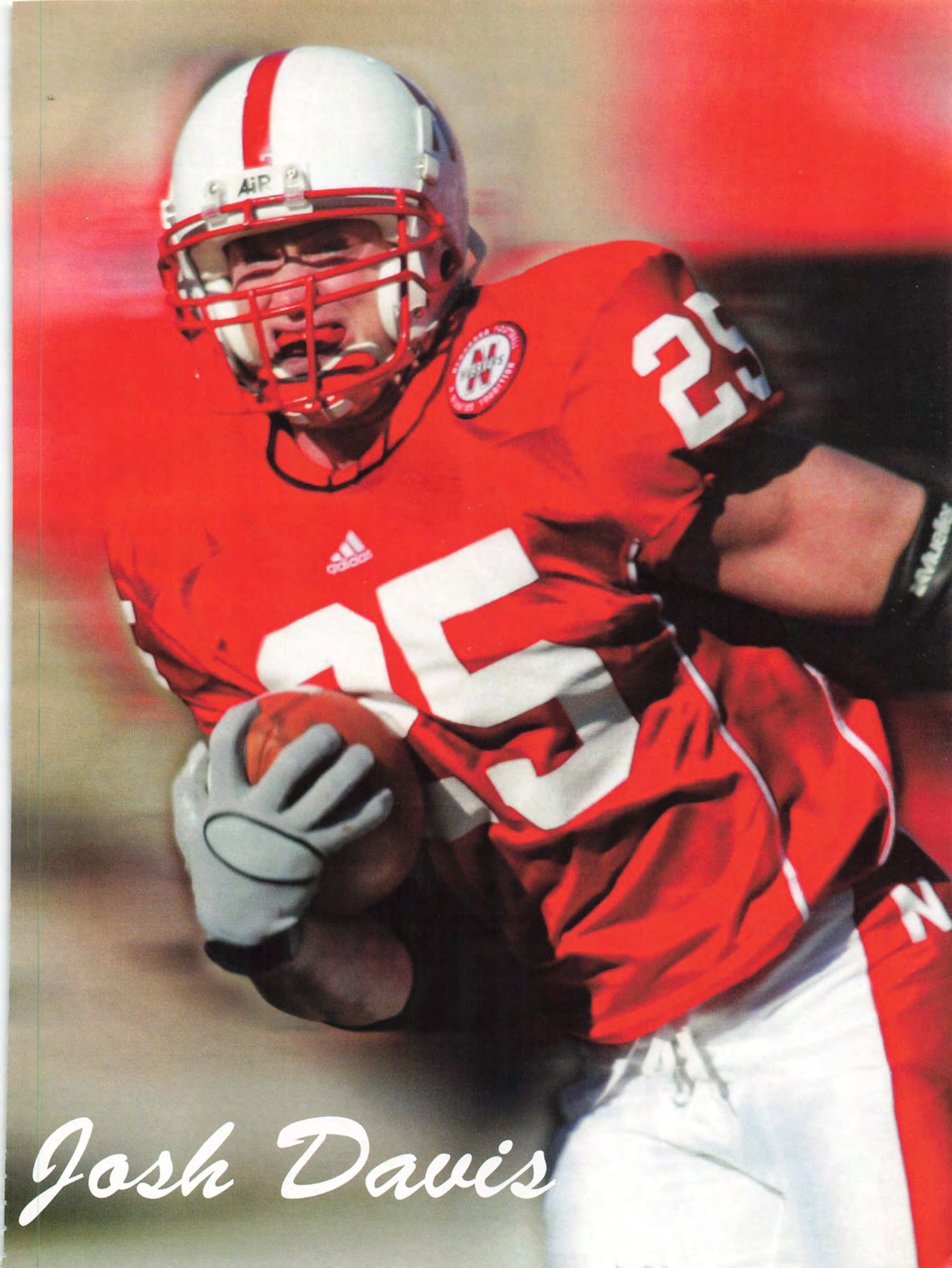
In addition to being smarter, he is accustomed to the speed of the game, an aspect to which many players, regardless of their position, have difficulty adjusting.

Initially, "everything moves so fast and you're a little bit nervous," said Davis. "But the more games you get under your belt, it's a lot easier. So I'd say it's definitely slowed down a lot."

He and Coleman talked about such things in their room at Harper Hall. They dealt with the homesickness every freshman, athlete or not, experiences and were supportive of not only each other but also the rest of those dealing with the first-time pressures of Division I-A football.

"Sometimes it was overwhelming," Davis said.

And sometimes athletes with the ability don't make it through. ■



Josh Davis



T.J. Hollowell

Happy With Choice

The plan was to go to college together. T.J. Hollowell and Vontez Duff have been friends since elementary school in Copperas Cove, Texas, and when it became apparent that both were talented enough to play major college football, it seemed only natural that they would accept scholarship offers from the same school.

"We were supposed to be a package deal," Hollowell said.

Nevertheless, he picked Nebraska and Duff picked Notre Dame. So it goes.

Their plan had included taking recruiting trips together, but Hollowell didn't have his SAT scores in time to visit Notre Dame when Duff did. And Duff didn't visit Nebraska, in part, because he wanted to play running back and the Cornhuskers were interested in him as a defensive back.

Duff ended up at cornerback, anyway. He was a third-team All-American in 2002.

Despite their plan, both have been happy with their choices, said Hollowell, who was "more than confident in the decision I made. I wanted to come to Nebraska and play."

He has played without redshirting (as has Duff), which means he is preparing for his final season. His time at Nebraska "has gone fast," he said. But he's ready to move on.

"I'm ready to go out in the real world and live my life," he said. "I'm tired of school."

However, "I'm not tired of football," he quickly added.

After alternating with Demorrio Williams at weak-side linebacker last season, Hollowell moved to strong-side or "Buck" linebacker in the spring, a move that could mean more playing time.

He and Williams often talked about being on the field together, but "it never came up in the coaches' minds. They never got the idea," said Hollowell, who finished atop the depth chart at the Buck.

He started twice and finished with 60 tackles, while Williams, a junior college transfer, was involved in a team-high 92 tackles. The two got along well; they became friends, in fact.

But "it's just the fact that you've got two real competitive guys that want to be on the field at the same time and one's got to sit back and watch the other play," said Williams.

"It can get very upsetting. You just don't feel right. You feel like you should be out there and the other guy feels like he should be out there. As a teammate, you can't be too personal about it because we're all trying to get to the same place. So we just sit back and deal with it."

Now, they won't have to. "We're both excited about it," Hollowell said.

The position switch wasn't as difficult as it might have been, considering he has played all three linebacker positions during his time at Nebraska, beginning on the strongside. But the position has changed in the

system of new defensive coordinator Bo Pelini, so Hollowell has had to re-learn it.

"It has some differences," he said. "As far as lining up on the tight end, covering the tight end, I've done that before. That wasn't new. But the technique and the alignment are different."

By the end of spring, he was feeling comfortable there.

Although he contributed as a true freshman, primarily on special teams, and backed up Mark Vedral at weakside linebacker as a sophomore, Hollowell has endured his share of problems.

He missed the 2001 opener because of an ankle sprain and was sidelined all of spring practice in 2002 following surgery on his right shoulder. Plus, like most players who come from a distance, he has missed family and friends, "nieces and nephews, my mother and brothers and sister," he said.

He has an older sister and two brothers, both of whom are "in jail," he said.

"That's really tough, going through a time of my life where I want them to come experience it, a college football atmosphere, and they can't. That kind of hurts me to think about it."

Plus, "you want to go visit them but you can't. It's a hard situation, but it's not going to kill me or them, so we'll make it through. That's life. They watch me on TV. They're proud of me."

So is his mom. "My graduating high school and coming to college is probably the happiest time of my mom's life," he said.

Thoughts of his family have gotten him through the tough times.

"When I'm stressed out and saying, 'I don't want to deal with school anymore,' that's when I feel the pressure," he said. "I've kind of got to settle myself down and think about my mom and dad."

"My mom and dad aren't together, but he's still in the picture. I think about him, too. So I kind of just gather my thoughts and push myself through when stuff starts getting me down."

Copperas Cove is located in central Texas, north and west of Austin, adjacent to Fort Hood. "A lot of college football players come out of that area," said Hollowell, who has competed against Oklahoma's Tommie Harris since "junior high days." Harris is from nearby Killeen.

Hollowell's high school teammates included Roderrick Jackson, a starting cornerback at Wyoming, and Howard Hodges, a starting defensive tackle at Iowa, in addition to Duff.

Had he and Duff followed their plan, they would still be teammates. But "I don't regret any decisions I've made, going through everything I've been through, coming to Nebraska," he said.

At some point in the future, when he looks back, "I'll probably be pretty proud of what I've accomplished, how I got through the hard times," Hollowell said.

Those times "could have easily dragged me down."

And sometimes, "I don't know how I made it through." ■

'Big-Time Dream'

For as long as he can remember, Trevor Johnson has wanted to be a football player. When he was in elementary school, he wanted to lift weights because he knew football players did.

His dad said he was too young to be lifting weights, but the desire didn't dissipate.

Finally, when he was old enough, he persuaded his dad to sign him up to play Midget Football. Because of his size and the league's rules, he was relegated to the line.

"I was big and slow," he said. "I just liked playing defense."

Johnson also likes playing defense now, after some uncertainty during his sophomore season at Nebraska. He began his Cornhusker career as a tight end, the position at which he probably earned the most recognition in high school and to which his football identity was tied since eighth grade. So when he was asked if he'd be interested in switching to rush end, he was understandably hesitant.

Some friends who remember his senior season at Lincoln (Neb.) Northeast High — 42 pass receptions for 736 yards and 10 touchdowns on a 10-2, state-semifinal team — still consider tight end his best position. But he's comfortable playing defense now, as he lives that dream of long ago.

Johnson's passion (his word) for football began as emulation of adults. His parents would have friends over to watch Nebraska games on television, and he would respond as they did.

"Everyone would be all intense," he said. "And after a loss, everyone would be mad."

Cornhusker losses were few and far between, of course, but Johnson remembers a season in which they "lost a couple of games at the end," probably 1990, when he was 9-years-old.

"I was so devastated, I wouldn't even talk to anyone," he said.

At first, he simply responded the way the adults around him responded.

"I'm watching the games, but I don't really realize what football is," he said. "Then I started getting into it a whole lot. And the next thing I know, I'm the one getting the most mad about (losses)."

"So I think watching Nebraska football is where my passion came from."

The passion was for the Cornhuskers, not just football. From that early age, he imagined himself playing at Nebraska. That became a "big-time dream," he said.

However, "I don't know if I actually thought it was possible."

By his senior year at Northeast, it was. He had gone from "a big and slow" Midget Football lineman to the Nebraska boys high school student-athlete of the year in both the Omaha World-Herald and Lincoln Journal State.

He had played on four consecutive Class A championship basketball teams and had earned the all-class gold medal in the discus at the state track and field championships.

He was a versatile athlete. Before high school, he also competed in soccer and wrestling — his dad, Robert, was

a three-time captain of the Cornhusker wrestling team, from 1973 to 1976. But his interest in football never wavered. "I played other sports to get better at football," he said.

Though tight end was his preference, the Omaha World-Herald named him honorary defensive captain on its 1998 All-Nebraska team, after he had 54 tackles, including 13 for losses totaling 130 yards, seven sacks and eight pass breakups and scored three defensive touchdowns.

His athleticism enabled him to make the transition from tight end to defensive end in the spring of his second year at Nebraska. He hadn't caught a pass as a red-shirted freshman, but he had played in all but one game — when he was sidelined by a hamstring pull — as a back-up tight end.

His first season, when he had redshirted, "it was kind of a thrill just to be here," he said. He had envisioned himself contributing "early on and then stepping up my last two years."

After that initial season as a backup, his vision changed. "I saw myself contributing even more, and set my goals a lot higher," he said. "Then they switched me to rush end."

He spent his sophomore season and the spring practices before and after adjusting to defense. His athleticism helped in the adjustment, enabling him to make plays even though he often found himself out of position. "You can't adjust really fast," he said. "I wasn't playing rush end well."

"At first, I was really confused about what I was doing. I was fired up about playing, being a good player here. But I saw most people don't get by on (athletic) ability."

Going into his senior season, he is still "learning a lot of things. You never stop learning when you do anything," he said. But "I feel really comfortable (at the position) now."

New defensive coordinator Bo Pelini has encouraged him to work on his speed, with the real possibility of his continuing to play at the next level.

Playing professionally has always been a dream, in the same way that playing at Nebraska was a dream. But Johnson, a three-time, first-team Academic All-Big 12 honoree, is realistic.

"Most recruits come in here thinking they're going to the NFL," he said. "But only a small portion of the guys on the team will have a chance, and only a small portion will make it."

Longshot or not, he is determined to give himself that chance. His being voted the team's Lifter of the Year reflects his commitment in the weight room, and his attitude has never been questioned.

Some fifth-year seniors are ready to move on, but not Johnson.

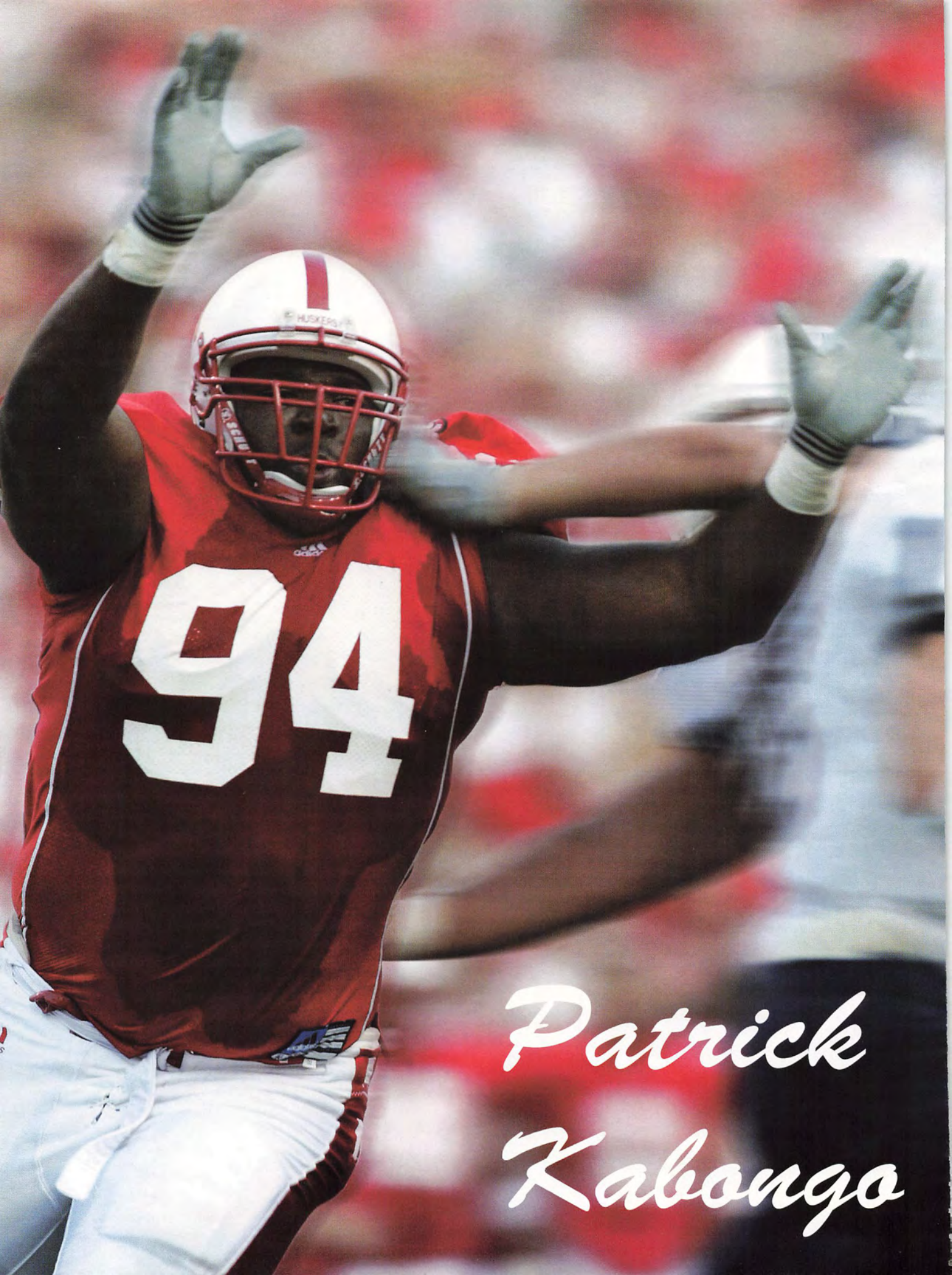
"Man, I love Nebraska football and everything about it," he said. "I love workouts. I love practices. They can be hard at times, but I'd play six, seven, eight years here. It's not getting old."

He was very young when he first imagined doing these things.

Maybe that has something to do with it. ■



Trevor Johnson



*Patrick
Kabongo*

'A Regular Guy'

As Patrick Kabongo prepares for his final season at Nebraska, he considers his Cornhusker legacy, how he'll be remembered, not only by fans but also by the community.

He understands his place in the program. Cornhusker football endures.

It "is always going to be there," he said. "Guys will be coming after me. Sometimes athletes forget after they leave here (that) people don't remember how many plays you made or how much time you put in. They remember what kind of impact you had on them.

"Your name stays stronger than anything. It's better for people to remember you in a good way, 'Man, it was cool when Pat was here,' not for my time on the field but for the person I was."

Chances are, Nebraska fans will remember him for both, for his play in the short term at least and for his character, certainly, over the long haul. As has often been noted, he is the embodiment of student-athlete, successful in the classroom — graduating in three years — as well as on the field.

Despite his accomplishments, however, "I'm a regular guy," he said.

Acknowledging that can be difficult because of the celebrity status accorded the Cornhuskers. It's easy to lose perspective during an athlete's four or five years of eligibility.

But "I value everybody the same way. They're very important," said Kabongo. "You can be a social worker and do way more than I'm doing, impacting way more lives than I am."

Still, he has impacted lives through his community involvement. He has earned a place on the AFCA Good Works Team and has twice been on the Brook Berringer Citizenship Team. He is actively involved in his church, and he is who he is because "I believe that's what God wanted me to be."

Such interests haven't diminished his commitment to football, though. He started seven games at defensive tackle last season, finishing sixth on the team with 62 tackles.

His strength has been as a pass rusher. He made nine tackles for losses, including two sacks, and had five quarterback hurries. He also broke up two passes and forced an interception.

During the spring, however, he probably spent more practice time trying to stop the run as a nose tackle, according to defensive line coach Jeff Jamrog. "We think, hopefully, he's going to be a big space-eater in the middle, occupying two blocks and holding up there," Jamrog said.

Nose tackle or tackle, "I don't think it's a dramatic difference," said Kabongo.

What has been dramatic is the change since he arrived at Nebraska as an eager, if not a little apprehensive, freshman in 1999. He not only had to deal with the usual pressures of adapting to college life but also to cultural differences, coming, as he did, from Montreal,

Quebec, Canada.

Although he spoke some English, his first language was French, and "it was tough," he said. "Certain words I didn't know, and for me to express myself was difficult."

Whatever problems he had didn't show, according to teammate Phil Peetz, who took the initiative to introduce himself early on. "He picked it (English) up exceptionally fast," said Peetz.

The language proved to be no barrier for Kabongo because he's "obviously a real outgoing guy and a lot of fun to be around," Peetz said. "He's one of my best friends."

Others members of Kabongo's recruiting class say the same about him. Jammal Lord, with whom he roomed early on, has described him as "just like a big brother to me."

The two did push-ups in their dorm room late at night and talked of when their time would come.

Going through two-a-day practices that first year was "probably the hardest time in my life. I was just praying to get up in the morning because it was so hard," Kabongo said.

"It's not a piece of cake to come here and do it."

The entire first year "is very hard," he said, crediting not only those in his class but also upperclassmen — among them Aaron Wills, Steve Warren, Loran Kaiser, Eric Johnson, Carlos Polk and Kyle Vanden Bosch (he can't mention only one) — with helping him make it through. "You get adjusted, make new friends and talk to a lot of people about how to go about things."

And, "most of all, 'you've got four more years (to play),' he said.

After reaching a comfort level, however, time seems to speed up. Three years remain. "Then, after your sophomore year, you're like, 'I've only got two years left,' he said. "And then, 'Man, I'm a senior.' You're really a senior after your last game as a junior. So it goes by fast."

From the moment he stepped on campus, he was physically imposing, at 6-foot-6 and more than 300 pounds. He has dropped some weight, is leaner, and his upper-body is more developed from long hours in the weight room. But the more significant changes have come inside.

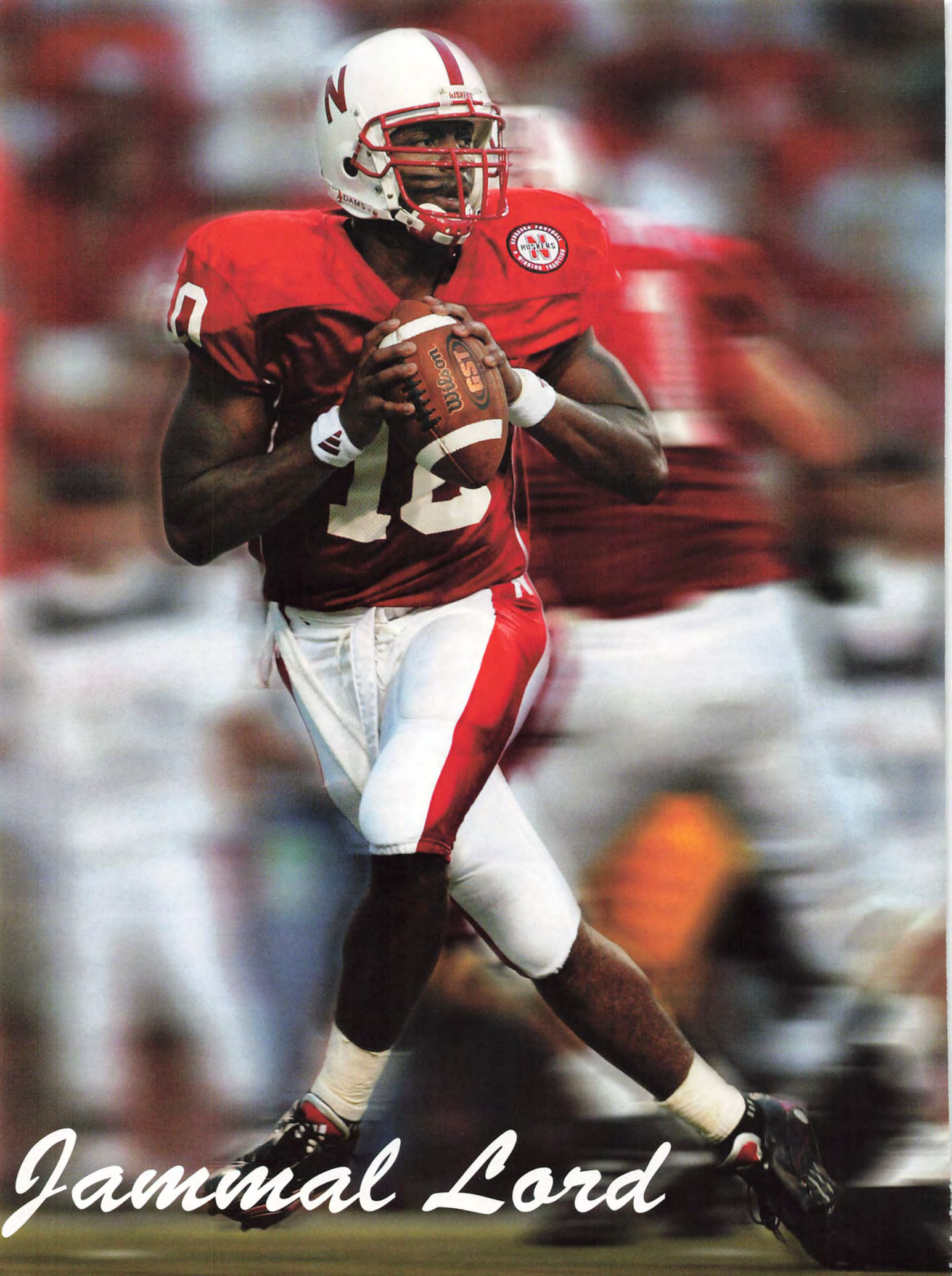
As with so many of his teammates, Kabongo would like to continue playing at the next level. "I very much love the game," he said. "But I know there's going to be an end.

"All your life you've been in the spotlight. If you can't make that transition, it's going to be hard psychologically. One day it's going to go, and when it does, that's fine. When the end comes, it's going to be OK. We move on. Nebraska football is great. But there's way more than that."

Looking back, he is convinced he understood that. "But I never cultivated it," he said.

"Coming here really opened me to do that, you know?"

He wants to be remembered for that. ■



Jammal Lord

Responsibilities

One thing is certain, Jammal Lord has learned to take the good with the bad. If he hadn't, he might not have survived last season. As the quarterback, he was a lightning rod for fan frustration.

And there was plenty of frustration in the wake of Nebraska's worst record since 1961.

Truth be told, Lord accepted more than his share of criticism, shouldering a burden that should have been shared by teammates and coaches. But he had no choice in the matter, really.

"If I'm not going to do it, no one is going to do it," he said. "I don't expect them to."

"I'm not going to say, 'He missed a block. He dropped that pass.' I'm going to say I threw it too high or I threw it too low or I threw it too long. I'm going to take the blame because that's me."

"That's just my attitude. If I say you're not doing this right or that right, then other people say, 'Well, he's not a leader. He points his finger at his team. He doesn't take the blame himself.'"

Lord is acutely aware of the leadership responsibility of being not only the quarterback but also a senior, a fact reflected during the spring, according to offensive coordinator Barney Cotton.

Despite a pulled quadriceps, Lord set an example by continuing to play. "He's been banged up and hurt and has never asked for any time off," Cotton said prior to the Red-White game.

"We know that he's been limited, but he's kind of brought his lunch pail to work and done what was asked of him without having to try to get out of things because he's been hurt."

Lord couldn't afford to take time off in the spring, given a new offensive system. And by the end of spring practice, he was comfortable with that system. "It's going to make us better," he said.

It will, if he continues to improve as a passer. Cotton's offense depends on efficient and less predictable passing, "a lot more short routes and every now and then, probably, going deep," said Lord, who demonstrated the ability to throw deep on play-action last season.

No one questioned his arm strength. But he wasn't always as efficient as he would have liked, completing less than 47 percent with as many interceptions as touchdowns.

He threw for 1,362 yards, however, a total that reflects how far he has come in a relatively short time. Even though he's a senior, he has just one season of significant experience. And keep in mind the oft-repeated fact that he rarely threw in high school — completing 21-of-44 passes as a senior.

Football as he knew it in Bayonne, N.J., was "run, run, run," he said.

Coming to Nebraska, "I had no idea what it meant," he said of the demands on him as a passer. "Right now, I'm trying to get that down. I'm still growing, still maturing as a passer."

As with the leadership responsibilities, he sees little

choice but to become a better, more efficient passer. "If I don't pass, we're probably going to go 0-14," he said.

Defenses will "put everybody in the 'box.' I'm not going to have that."

To focus on Lord's deficiencies as a passer is to ignore his extraordinary ability as a runner. He established Nebraska's single-season rushing record by a quarterback, of course, with 1,412 yards, including a school single-game record of 234 against Texas.

He averaged 5.6 yards per carry, despite 296 yards in losses. And his rushing total, even not counting the Independence Bowl game, was greater than Eric Crouch's, Scott Frost's and Tommie Frazier's. In short, the Cornhuskers have never had his equal as a running threat under center.

Nevertheless, he seemed to be criticized about as often as he was praised. His first season as the starter ended up in "mixed reviews," he said. "It depends on the game, I guess."

"Some games, you do bad and they boo. Some games, you do good and they cheer. But that's the fans. That's what they're supposed to do. I have no problem with that."

"There's always a critic, something where you say, 'Well, he didn't do this right.'"

Lord has done the same thing himself, critiquing athletes.

"I do it when I watch TV," he said. "I don't say, 'This guy sucks, why did he do that?' But I'm on my couch and I'm like ... you know what I'm saying. I can understand it."

When he's watching on television, however, he is limited in the same way that those who are quick to criticize him are limited. "They don't really understand what's going on behind the scenes," he said. "They just see what they see, from way up in the stands, that he did this or he did that."

Although it can be difficult to ignore fan criticism, "it would hurt me more if my teammates said, 'You suck.' But then again, I've got to go out there and play, regardless," said Lord.

"Everybody has their own opinions. I've got to keep doing what I'm doing."

Despite the down times, football remains fun for him, and "it's getting a whole lot better."

Why? "Attitude," he said, "just being in a battle with your friends. I had the drive, but I didn't know what it took. I have it now. I always had it. It's just the fact that now I'm playing with it."

Taking the bad with the good is part of that attitude.

"Jammal knows that comes with the territory. It's part of the (quarterback's) job description," said senior free safety Jerrell Pippens, Lord's friend and long-time roommate.

"When you lose, everyone blames it on you. He knew that coming in behind a great player like Eric Crouch. He knew that you've got to roll with the punches, take the good with the bad."

"Last season, Jammal took a lot of the bad. God willing, this fall he can get the good." ■

Accepting His Role

Phil Peetz has learned a lot during his four years at Nebraska.

He has learned about the ways of the world, becoming less naïve, "seeing how things really work as opposed to how you maybe thought things worked," he said.

"That's just part of the maturity process."

And he has learned how difficult catching passes can be.

"It's so much harder than it looks," he said.

He was a lineman in high school — tackle on offense, nose guard on defense — and "never fully appreciated what all goes into catching a football in the middle of a play," he said.

"I'd say, 'Oh, come on, it can't be that tough.'"

But he found out it was when he tried it.

Peetz first tried it during the spring of 2001, after moving to tight end. He had been a back-up rush end as a redshirted freshman, after being recruited as a nose tackle.

At 235 pounds, he didn't have the size to hold up in the middle, and rush end seemed like a good fit. But Coach Frank Solich suggested he might be better off playing tight end.

The basis of the plan was to utilize his blocking skills. He was a first-team Super-State and All-Nebraska offensive lineman as a senior at Elkhorn, (Neb.) High School. So that aspect of the transition was easy. He just had to shake off the rust, accumulated during two seasons devoted to defense.

Even in Nebraska's run-oriented offense, however, tight ends have to be capable of catching an occasional pass. And that's where the problems began for Peetz.

"It looks easy for the guys who have been doing it for their whole lives," he said. "But for me, the first couple of days (in practice) were ugly, to say the very least."

"It was a little frustrating at times; I won't lie."

As with anything else, repetition is the key, "just catching a ball over and over again," he said. "You become much more comfortable with it, learning how to place your hands when you're catching the ball coming in high or catching the ball coming in low, things like that."

He has gotten by with the help of the other tight ends. "I've been really lucky," he said. "They help me out with those things because they realize the situation I came from."

"They've been there to calm me down a little bit, tell me that things are going to be OK, (that) everybody screws up. They've been very helpful. I've been very appreciative."

Peetz has been appreciative of everything Nebraska has offered, since he arrived on scholarship in the late summer of 1999. The time has flown by. "It's amazing," he said. "It really is."

He has made the most of his opportunities, receiving a degree in criminal justice in May. He is considering graduate work in history, after meeting the undergraduate requirements. His cumulative grade-point average is among the highest on the team, nearly perfect, over 3.9.

He will remain at Nebraska until his scholarship expires and then decide on a direction. Eventually, he plans to enlist in the military, Army or Marines, as further preparation for a career in federal law enforcement, the FBI, Secret Service or CIA. "Any of those would be OK," he said.

Even though he already has a degree and has lettered twice, he has had to endure his share of frustrations, including not seeing as much action as he would have liked.

"I remember when I was a kid, I'd read about Huskers saying, 'Well, I have to wait my turn,' " he said. "Maybe I didn't appreciate that as much as I do now, after I've had to go through it."

He grew up a Nebraska fan and attended the Big Red camp every summer he was in high school. Jay Runty, a former Cornhusker walk-on from Elkhorn, gave him a copy of the strength and conditioning program, and he was following that before Nebraska began recruiting him.

Without dedication in the weight room, he would never have been offered a scholarship.

"I firmly believe that," he said. "I tell other people that. I don't think I was gifted enough as an athlete to just show up and play football. I had to put a lot of extra work into it to be able to do it."

He has set a good example, not only in the weight room but also on the field and, as mentioned already, in the classroom. As a result, he has earned the respect of those around him.

He will be a leader among the tight ends this season, according to sophomore Matt Herian, the only experienced player at the position. The others "might look up to me a little bit," said Herian.

"But I think they look up more to Phil. Everybody looks up to Phil."

Peetz played well in the spring, "really stepped up," Solich said. "He's strong, physical... (a) tight end that we needed to have become a good blocker for us. That's what he's all about."

He would like to be about catching a pass now and then, too. But he'll do whatever he can.

In any case, he has things in perspective, accepting his role on the team.

"I realize I'm probably not going to be All-American or all-conference," said Peetz, who weighs about 270 now. "If I am, great. But if I'm not, the sun will come up the next day and I'll be able to look myself in the mirror and say, 'I think I did OK for myself.'"

"That's definitely something I've learned." ■



Phil Peetz

Kindred Spirit

Jammal Lord attracted Jerrell Pippens' attention by singing a Biggie Smalls' song on the way to a team meeting when the two were freshmen in the fall of 1999.

The late Smalls, a rapper also known as Notorious B.I.G., was "real big back East" at the time, according to Pippens, recalling that first encounter with Lord.

He asked where Lord was from.

"Brooklyn," Lord replied.

Though he went to high school in Bayonne, N.J., Lord grew up in Brooklyn.

Lord asked where he was from.

"West Philly," Pippens said.

With that exchange, a deep friendship began. "The rest is history," Pippens said not long after the end of spring practice. "We've been roommates for like years. We've never had any arguments, never any fights, never any disagreements. We think alike. We're each other's crutches."

Had it not been for Lord, Pippens might not have endured his redshirt season.

And vice versa. "If I had kept to myself, I'd have probably transferred. I would have probably been back home," said Lord. "But I've had great friends around me."

He and Pippens are part of a "family" within the greater Nebraska football family, which includes, among others, Benard Thomas, Demorrio Williams, Terrell Butler and T.J. Hollowell.

"The list goes on and on," Pippens said. "We go through ups and downs together, stuff on the field and off the field. We push each other. We critique each other."

The friendships they have established will "go on forever," he said. "I really appreciate that and thank God because I don't think we could have made it this far without each other."

For him, the group has become an extension of the family he had to leave behind in west Philadelphia, his mom and his younger brother Steven Davis, as well as his grandparents.

They were among about 20 friends and family members at last season's Penn State game, a bittersweet experience. Despite the decisive loss, Pippens was involved in a career-high eight tackles. Plus, "not a lot of people from where I am get to play in front of 110,000 on national TV," he said.

He has missed watching his brother — who intends to play football at NCAA Division III Delaware Valley College in the fall — go through high school, "what I call the 'golden years,' with his proms, football games and stuff," said Pippens. "But you have to make sacrifices."

His mom made sacrifices for him, so he could walk on at Nebraska and pursue a dream of playing major college football as well as earn a degree — he is slated to graduate in August.

She wanted to go to college, he said, but as a single parent couldn't.

The university's graduation ceremony is slated for the day after his maternal grandmother's birthday, which is appropriate because "she made her share of sacrifices for my mom and my aunts and for her grandkids and myself, so it's going to be sweet," Pippens said.

His mom plans to attend the ceremony, he said, "with bells on."

The degree, in communication studies, is for his mom. But football is what brought him to Nebraska, even though the track and field team recruited him as a hurdler.

That passion for football is what binds him and his family within the team family.

"All of us had one thing in common, we had an agenda, and that was to be the best football players we can be," he said. "You come to Nebraska to win a national championship, ultimately."

That the Cornhuskers weren't even contenders for the Big 12 title last season has driven him and his teammates since they returned from the Independence Bowl loss in late December.

"Everyone's doing something right now, as we speak, working out, playing racquetball, lifting weights, looking at film. If they're not taking finals, they're doing something to get better because that (the 7-7 record) was just crazy," he said. "We all take that (memory) with us every day."

"We're like-minded guys, coming together for one goal, to get this program back on top."

Within that group is the smaller group, which began forming for Pippens on the day he heard Lord doing the Biggie Smalls cover. "Being in Lincoln is kind of different for us," he said.

Even though they are from all parts of the country — Thomas from California, Butler from Georgia, Williams and Hollowell from Texas — "we relate to each other," Pippens said.

"How you dress, how you talk, everyone's kind of from the same background even though we're from different parts of the country. We speak a language that we all can understand."

They also can understand each other's music, even though it doesn't sound the same. The Texas guys like Screwed Up Click, a kind of "slow motion" rap unique to their state, said Pippens, while Butler prefers "down South music, booty shaking, something that gets your head bobbing."

"Everybody has the music they listened to growing up."

Occasionally, they will engage in good-natured, regionally biased disputes about what CDs to play. But the bottom line is, the music all has the "same message."

Lord's Biggie Smalls rap conveyed a secondary message for Pippens: Here was a kindred spirit. They have been the best of friends ever since. "That's something that's not going to break when it's all said and done at Nebraska," Pippens said. "I'm sure we're going to keep in touch." ■



Jerrell Dippens



Josh Sewell

Moving Around

With every snap of the ball this season, Josh Sewell will be a reminder of a recruiting reality, that good players often go unnoticed and slip through the cracks.

Sewell emerged from the spring as the starting center, playing well enough that Richie Incognito, who had been moved to center to replace John Garrison, could return to left tackle.

"He's got the kind of feet and ability to move laterally," Coach Frank Solich said in assessing Sewell's ability on the Monday before the spring game. "That's not automatic."

"You can be a great offensive lineman and not be able to play the center spot because you can't snap the ball and take the steps you need to take to get yourself in position to make blocks."

At times, the center is expected to "reach a full man," said Solich. "You're asked to keep 'tilted' nose guards from penetrating, and it's not an easy assignment to do that. So if you have the talent to do that and you have the strength to do that, you have a chance to be a good center."

Sewell has shown the strength and talent to do those things. And the indications are, he will be a good center.

Otherwise, the Incognito experiment wouldn't have been scrapped.

Players regularly rise from anonymity during spring practice. But Sewell is a senior, and his Cornhusker career has amounted to limited action in five games last season.

Even though he played enough to earn a letter, questions about him probably would have drawn blank looks from most Cornhusker fans. "Sewell? Isn't he a back-up lineman?"

In his case, the anonymity is understandable. For one thing, he walked on. And for another, he began his college career at I-AA Indiana State, where he played as a redshirted freshman.

Indiana State gave him a scholarship, something neither Nebraska nor any other Division I-A school, for that matter, was willing to do. The Cornhuskers wanted him to walk on.

Size was a factor. "I was probably a little small at the time, only weighed 280 when I was there," said Sewell, who stands just under 6-foot-2 and has put on about 20 pounds of lean body mass.

"There" was Lincoln Southeast High School, where he played on the Knights' 1998 Class A state championship team, on a line that included Nebraska teammate Chris Loos.

Sewell had attended two other high schools, a transience that might have contributed to his being overlooked, to some degree. He spent his freshman and sophomore years at Redwood High in Visalia, Calif., and the first quarter of his junior year at Christian High in Lincoln.

His parents are from the Midwest, Sewell explained, and "they got tired of life in California. It's too liberal, and they're more conservative. So they decided to come

back here."

His Lincoln Christian football team went 0-9, and he transferred to Southeast, "the week after" a snowstorm knocked out power and paralyzed the city in late October of 1997.

Playing only one season at Southeast "was probably the biggest thing," he said.

That and his size. "He was not an imposing looking lineman coming out of high school," said Solich. "But it's hard to measure a guy's heart and his drive and his energy level. You're going to have guys that maybe you couldn't necessarily project to do it but turn into great players."

Sewell's heart, drive and energy level have been reflected in his dedication in the weight room. He was a finalist for the team's Lifter of the Year, after improving his performance index by more than 500 points. He got stronger and faster, lowering both 10- and 40-yard dash times.

The improved physical skills carried onto the field. "It happened fairly quickly," Solich said. "He kind of turned on the switch and all of a sudden, he got confidence in the plays."

Sewell has never lacked confidence in himself. Teammates at Indiana State questioned his decision to transfer to Nebraska. After all, he hadn't even started for a team with a losing record.

"A lot of people told me I wasn't going to make it," he said. But "I like to have people tell me I can't do something. I've always been a motivated person. I know I've got the talent. I've got what it takes. I think I've always known. It's not something that just kind of happened."

He doesn't regret the three semesters he spent at Indiana State. The experience was positive, "but it wasn't right for me. I knew I wanted to play with the best," he said.

For him, that meant Nebraska, where he had friends such as Loos.

Sewell had never played center when he was asked to move from guard in the spring of 2002, following Garrison's graduation. His introduction to the position included lining up in practice with nose tackle Ryon Bingham "an inch off your face," he said. "Bingham's a beast."

Even so, "I think it was good because it was another challenge to overcome."

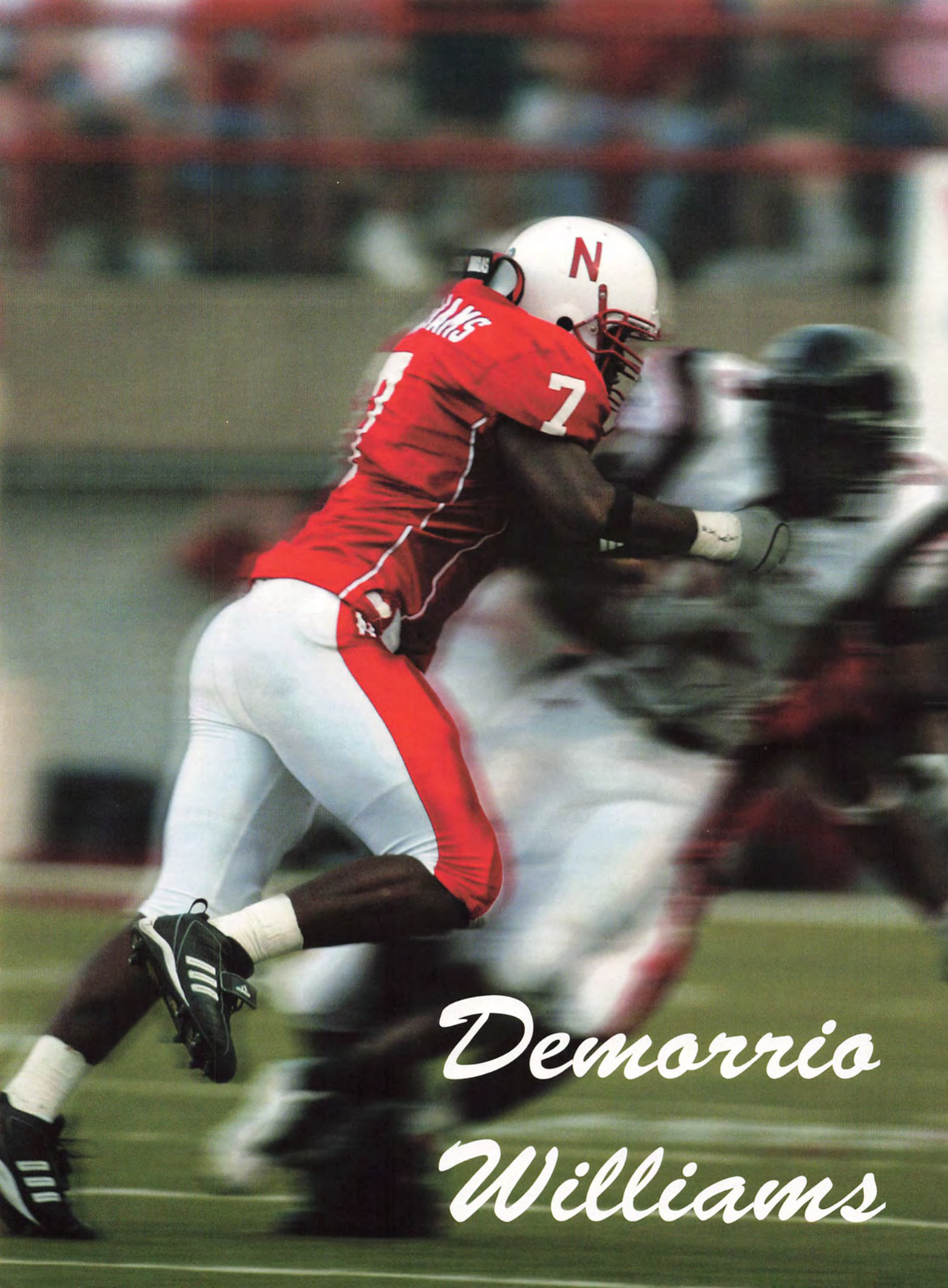
Sewell has confronted such challenges every time he has transferred from one school to another.

"He's got a great attitude," offensive coordinator and line coach Barney Cotton said midway through spring practice. "He's got good strength. He can step and snap at the same time."

Cotton had no preconceived notions about what Sewell could or couldn't do, or that he had slipped through the recruiting cracks. "I didn't know what to expect," said Cotton.

"I'd never met him until I got here. I just knew he was one of my guys. I didn't even know he had been a walk-on kid. Where did he transfer from?"

Any Nebraska fan could answer that question now. ■



*Demorris
Williams*

His Own Style

Comparisons between Demorrio Williams and Terrell Farley were as commonplace as they were superficial. And Williams tried to avoid them, to establish his own identity.

Like Farley, he was a junior college transfer with a deserved reputation as a big-play outside linebacker. But "honestly, that was just other people talking," said Williams.

"I never really knew the guy, never really saw him play."

He could watch videotape of Farley, first-team all-conference in his first season at Nebraska on the 1995 national championship team, of course. But "you don't want to be classified as somebody you never saw do anything," Williams said. "All I do is tune stuff like that out."

"And I was able to tune that out right away."

No one needed to tell him. Williams understood when he stepped on the field for the first time during spring practice in 2002. He had the advantage of an early start, something the three junior college transfers in Nebraska's 2003 recruiting class won't have. Defensive end Wali Muhammad, cornerback Donald DeFrاند and offensive linemen Darren DeLone will begin practice in the fall.

If they ask Williams for advice, he will tell them to beware of what others, specifically reporters, say about them, not to let "the media pump them up to be something they're really not," he said.

"I'll just tell them, you've got to come here and work hard. When you first get here, you might not like where they stick you on the depth chart, but the depth chart changes every day. All you've got to do is go out there and prove yourself. They'll see that and find a way to get on the field."

That's what he did, emerging from the spring atop the depth chart, sharing No. 1 at weakside linebacker with T.J. Hollowell, who had been sidelined by a shoulder injury.

Williams started 11 games and finished as the Cornhuskers' leading tackler, with 92, including six for losses and one sack. He had five quarterback hurries, caused two fumbles and blocked a kick. By just about any standard except his own, his first season was outstanding. But he wasn't satisfied.

In fact, "personally, it was very frustrating," he said.

A significant part of the frustration was the 7-7 record.

Beyond that, however, and a factor in the record, were the restrictions the system placed on him. "I wanted to come here and be a difference-maker," he said. "I wanted to be an impact player, and I feel like last year I wasn't."

Although his statistics would seem to argue otherwise, "I feel like I didn't get to contribute to the team like I wanted to," he said. "I just feel like I was being held back."

Because he and Hollowell alternated, neither could get into a rhythm. Each would play a series or two and then go to the sideline. "A lot of people who came to the (2002) spring game thought they saw what I could do,"

said Williams, who made 13 tackles including two for losses.

"What people fail to realize is, during the spring game, they (coaches) let me play. They let me go out there and play my style of ball. And when the season came, they didn't let me."

He expects to spend more time on the field in defensive coordinator Bo Pelini's system. And if that's the case, he's confident he'll be able to have the impact he couldn't have last season.

Williams made a relatively quick transition from Kilgore, Texas, Junior College. And he expects DeFrاند, Muhammad and DeLone to be accepted as he was, though he acknowledges it took a little time to feel comfortable around new teammates, most of whom came directly from high school.

When he arrived on campus for his first semester, he spent most of the time in the dorm room he shared with freshman quarterback Curt Dukes, who also enrolled at mid-year.

He would go to church on Sundays and occasionally he and Dukes would go out to get something to eat. But mostly when he wasn't in class, he would be in the room, watching television or talking on the telephone to a girlfriend back home in Texas — a long-distance relationship that didn't last. When teammates asked him to join them, "I'd say, 'Naw, I'm going to sit and chill,'" he said.

Once spring practice began, however, his circle of friends quickly widened to include, among others, Hollowell, Benard Thomas, Jammal Lord, Jerrell Pippens and Terrell Butler.

He didn't have transportation, so "one of them would always pick me up," he said. And following practices, "we'd all go get something to eat. We'd hang out and stuff."

From the beginning, Williams had the respect of teammates and coaches, according to Coach Frank Solich, not only because of his ability but also because of "how he conducts himself," said Solich. "It's evident he's a team guy and he wants this program to have great, great success."

Even though his tenure is only one season and two springs, Williams has showed a willingness to be a leader. "I think he feels more comfortable now," Solich said following spring practice.

Despite earning a starting job, "I didn't feel like I could say a lot," said Williams. "But as a guy that played last year, I feel like now I can say stuff to the team and they will listen."

Solich noticed that Williams was "more verbal" in the spring, "to where I think he's really working at trying to build other guys' confidence up, having the team function as one unit. His leadership ability is really surfacing. He is one of those kinds of personalities that you just like," Solich said.

"He does everything right. He wants the best for everybody. And he'll play his heart out."

Farley might have been that way, too. But Williams has his own style. ■

Position-By-Position

QUARTERBACK

Jammal Lord, Sr.
Mike Stuntz, Jr.
Brett Lindstrom, Sr.

Outlook

With a season's worth of starting experience, Lord should thrive in new offensive coordinator Barney Cotton's system, particularly if the line can provide him with sufficient protection so that called passes don't turn into quests for self preservation, unintended running plays.

The glaring concern is depth. Spring practice ended without a clear-cut back up, and Curt Dukes, who was in the thick of things to be the top back-up, transferred, as did Garth Glissman. As a result, Stuntz becomes No. 2 by default, at least until freshman Joe Dailey arrives for fall practice.

I-BACK/FULLBACK

I-back

David Horne, So.
Josh Davis, Sr.
Cory Ross, So.
Robin Miller, Sr.

Fullback

Judd Davies, Sr.
DeAntae Grixby, Sr.
Steve Kriewald, Jr.
Dane Todd, RFr.
Andy Wingender, Sr.
Grant Miller, RFr.

Outlook

Horne finished the spring strong and appeared to have a slight edge on Davis and Ross, both of whom had their moments. The determining factor will be which I-back shows an ability to make big plays, something the Cornhuskers lacked last season.



David Horne

Miller isn't out of the picture, particularly in light of Marques Simmons' decision to transfer. But at some point early in preseason practice, the coaches will have to focus on two or, at most, three because getting more backs than that equal repetitions in practice is nearly impossible.

Davies is solid at a deep position, which could be utilized in different ways under Cotton.

WIDE RECEIVER

X

Ross Pilkington, So.
Tim Liley, Sr.
Kade Pittman, Fr.
Grant Mulkey, RFr.
Kiffin Wigert, Jr.
Ryan Ommert, Sr.

Z

Jack O'Holleran, Jr.
Mark LeFlore, So.
Ben Zajicek, Jr.
Mike McLaughlin, So.
Isaiah Fluellen, RFr.

Outlook

Pilkington is a rising star and the most experienced of a group of young wide receivers, following a freshman season in which he caught 14 passes for 301 yards and one touchdown. O'Holleran, who has yet to earn a letter, was among the surprises of the spring, climbing to the top of the depth chart.



Ross Pilkington

Lord's improvement as a passer depends on those to whom he throws and evaluation will continue in the fall. "We need to continue to look at our receiving corps, make sure that we have the best combination on the field, guys that can make plays but yet also hold up in the blocking game," said Solich.

That requirement won't change, even though the system has.

TIGHT END (Y)

Matt Herian, So.
Phil Peetz, Sr.
Chris Septak, Jr.
Dusty Keiser, Jr.
Alex Shada, Jr.
John Knopp, So.

Outlook



Matt Herian

Herian has drawn raves since his first reception as a true freshman, a 33-yarder from Lord, good for a touchdown against Utah State. The numbers reflect his potential. He caught only seven passes last season, but four went for

touchdowns, and he tied Pilkington for second on the team with 301 yards.

Herian has speed and he has gotten bigger and stronger to increase his effectiveness as a blocker, a skill that characterizes Peetz, who "really stepped up and had a good spring," Solich said.

Septak is finally healthy, plus talented freshmen Josh Mueller and J.B. Phillips join the fray in the fall.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Left tackle

Richie Incognito, So.
Nick Povendo, Jr.
Gary Pike, So.
Cory Timm, RFr.

Left guard

Mike Erickson, Jr.
Jake Anderson, Jr.
Carson Schott, So.

Center

Josh Sewell, Sr.
Kurt Mann, RFr.
Jack Limbaugh, Jr.

Right guard

Junior Tagoa'i, Sr.
Brandon Koch, So.
Tim Green, Sr.
Brian Nelson, Sr.
Jermaine Leslie, RFr.

Right tackle

Dan Vili Waldrop, Sr.
Chris Loos, Sr.
Jemayel Phillips, RFr.
Cody Volk, Sr.

Outlook

Sewell's emergence in the spring allowed Incognito to return to the all-important left tackle. Even though Incognito missed some practices, he showed no signs of decline from a freshman season in which he earned all-conference honorable mention and led the team in pancake blocks.



Richie Incognito

"Every time he's on the field, his talent shows," said Solich.

The rest of the line appeared to be set at spring's end, with Tagoa'i joining returning starters Vili Waldrop and Erickson. The problem is, Tagoa'i was suspended indefinitely soon after spring practice ended as a result of an off-field incident, leaving his status in doubt.

Position Breakdown

DEFENSIVE END

Left

Benard Thomas, Jr.
Titus Adams, So.
Tyler Toline, Jr.
Jay Moore, RFr.

Right

Trevor Johnson, Sr.
Adam Carriker, RFr.
Jeff McBride, Jr.

Outlook

Johnson has adjusted well since moving from tight end and has realistic hopes of continuing at the next level. Thomas has benefited from red-shirting and has two years left to play to the potential that made him a prize recruit out of high school. He emerged as a vocal leader in the spring.



Benard Thomas

Adams has made a seamless transition from tackle, though he could still play inside if needed, and along with Carriker, who racked up sacks during spring scrimmages, provides depth to make the position solid. In addition, junior college transfer Wali Muhammad will arrive in the fall.

DEFENSIVE TACKLE

Tackle

Le Kevin Smith, So.
Seppo Ewvaraye, So.
Nathan Krug, So.

Nose tackle

Ryon Bingham, Sr.
Patrick Kabongo, Sr.
Jason Lohr, Sr.
Jared Helming, So.
Brandon Greeson, RFr.

Outlook

Bingham is a steady performer, without much fanfare. Kabongo probably spent more time at nose tackle in the spring but can "jump back and forth if you wanted him to," Solich said.



Le Kevin Smith

In addition, Lohr is back, after two seasons on the sideline.

Smith was outstanding in the spring, showing that

"he was able to supply you with a great deal of consistency in the quality of play that he was performing," said Solich.

Ewvaraye is finally healthy and figures in a five-man rotation on the inside. "Certainly, we feel it can be a very strong position for us," Solich said.

LINEBACKER

Buck

T.J. Hollowell, Sr.
Ira Cooper, Jr.
Chad Sievers, Jr.

Mike

Barrett Ruud, Jr.
Steve Safrank, Sr.
Stewart Bradley, RFr.

Will

Demorrio Williams, Sr.
Lannie Hopkins, Jr.
Chad Buller, Sr.

Outlook

Cooper emerged during the spring, playing all three linebacker spots, prompting Solich to remark, "He probably has played the best football, by far, since he's been in our system."



Barrett Ruud

Hollowell also can play all three but settled in at the Buck, moving from Will, where Williams is a fixture. Changes in the system under new defensive coordinator Bo Pelini have freed Ruud in the middle, allowing him to utilize his speed and ability to pursue to the ball.

There were questions about depth at linebacker going into the spring, but not now. Add a healthy Hopkins and a healthy Sievers to the mix and the linebacking should be solid.

SECONDARY

Left corner

Fabian Washington, So.
Terrell Butler, Sr.
Andrew Shanle, RFr.

Right corner

Lornell McPherson, Jr.
Pat Ricketts, Sr.
Willie Amos, Jr.
Kellen Huston, Jr.

Free safety

Josh Bullocks, So.

Jerrell Pippens, Sr.
Dan Burrow, Jr.

Strong safety

Philip Bland, Jr.
Daniel Bullocks, So.
Shane Siegel, So.
Blake Tiedtke, So.

Outlook

Washington is set at one corner and there was progress during the spring at identifying another. McPherson played well enough to draw mention from Solich following the Red-White game. He and Ricketts shared the top spot on the post-spring depth chart.

Amos practiced but couldn't participate in contact in the spring. Junior college transfer Donald DeFrاند arrives in the fall, as do freshmen Adrain Turner and Titus Brothers.



F. Washington

"You need to have two great corners in the Big 12," said Solich.

Bland missed the spring with a shoulder injury but should be ready to go in the fall. "I think we'll have an excellent group of safeties," Solich said.

KICKING GAME

Punter

Kyle Larson, Sr.
Sam Koch, So.

Place-kicker

Sandro DeAngelis, Jr.
Dale Endorf, Sr.

Outlook

Larson is a candidate for post-season honors, but Solich wasn't comfortable with the consistency of either DeAngelis or Endorf. The departed Josh Brown "gave us something that right now we don't have at that level," said Solich. Freshman David Dyches will have an opportunity in the fall.

The list of punt and kickoff return candidates was narrowed, but final decisions are pending.

Solich hasn't ruled out the possibility of an incoming player returning kicks but "there's no one there that's clear-cut in terms of coming in and saying he's the guy," he said.

"Most likely, the return guy will come from the guys in the spring."

Washington and Davis were prominent among them.

2003 Roster

(Source: Huskers.com. Does not include 2003 recruits)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Hometown (school)
96	*Adams, Titus	NT	6-3	290	So.	Omaha, Neb. (Creighton Prep)
27	**Amos, Willie	LCB	6-0	185	Jr.	Sweetwater, Texas
87	Andersen, Chase	DE	6-1	220	RFr.	Lincoln, Neb. (East)
70	*Andersen, Jake	OG	6-1	300	Jr.	Littleton, Colo. (Mullen)
87	Andersen, Neil	DE	6-1	225	So.	Davenport, Iowa (Assumption)
61	Atha, Peter	MLB	6-3	230	So.	Topeka, Kan.
59	**Bingham, Ryon	NT	6-3	290	Sr.	Sandy, Utah (Alta)
38	Biodrowski, Brandon	WR	5-10	190	Jr.	Fort Calhoun, Neb.
16	Biodrowski, Cole	LCB	5-11	175	So.	Fort Calhoun, Neb.
21	**Bland, Philip	FS	5-11	205	Jr.	Lafayette, Colo. (Fairview)
46	Bradley, Stewart	MLB	6-4	260	RFr.	Salt Lake City, Ut. (Highland)
18	Brungardt, Mark	BLB	6-2	225	RFr.	Norfolk, Neb. (Catholic)
50	Brunsting, Adam	OG	6-0	295	So.	Omaha, Neb. (Cent. Christian)
65	Bryant, Chris	DT	6-3	280	RFr.	Aurora, Colo. (Smoky Hills)
39	*Buller, Chad	WLB	5-11	215	Sr.	Henderson, Neb. (Heartland)
14	*Bullocks, Daniel	SS	6-1	200	So.	Chattanooga, Tenn. (Hixson)
20	*Bullocks, Josh	FS	6-1	195	So.	Chattanooga, Tenn. (Hixson)
36	Burrow, Dan	FS	5-10	185	Jr.	Ames, Iowa
4	*Butler, Terrell	LCB	5-10	190	Sr.	Austell, Ga. (Pebblebrook)
90	Carriker, Adam	RDE	6-6	250	RFr.	Kennewick, Wash.
27	**Cooper, Ira	BLB	6-2	230	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
4	***Davies, Judd	FB	6-0	250	Sr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
1	*Davis, Josh	IB	5-11	205	Sr.	Loveland, Colo.
22	*DeAngelis, Sandro	PK	5-8	190	Jr.	Niagara Falls, Ont., Canada
48	Denman, Charlie	BLB	5-11	230	So.	Rusk, Texas
32	Endorf, Dale	PK	6-0	210	Sr.	Wichita, Kan.
78	**Erickson, Mike	OG	6-4	305	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Papio-LaVista)
97	*Ewary, Seppo	DT	6-5	320	So.	Laurel, Neb. (Laurel-Concord)
62	Fisher, Anthony	DE	6-1	235	RFr.	Arapahoe, Neb.
28	Fluellen, Isaiah	WR	6-0	185	RFr.	Ramstein, Germany
41	Franzluebbers, Jared	WLB	6-0	210	So.	Dodge, Neb.
72	Green, Tim	OG	6-4	325	Sr.	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
99	Greeson, Brandon	NT	6-3	315	RFr.	High Point, N.C. (Central)
6	***Grixby, DeAntae	IB	5-8	215	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Central)
26	Guse, Kevin	RCB	5-11	185	Sr.	Longmont, Colo.
58	Haney, Justin	OG	5-11	295	RFr.	Ojai, Calif. (Nordhoff)
5	Hansen, Ben	IB	6-0	200	Fr.	Cedar Bluffs, Neb.
88	Hassebroek, Adam	WR	6-1	215	So.	Lincoln, Neb. (Lincoln High)
73	Helming, Jared	NT	6-3	290	So.	Springfield, Mo. (Kickapoo)
11	*Herian, Matt	TE	6-5	240	So.	Pierce, Neb.
2	***Hollowell, T.J.	BLB	6-0	230	Sr.	Copperas Cove, Texas
40	*Hopkins, Lannie	WLB	6-2	220	Jr.	Rowlett, Texas (Rowlett)
9	*Horne, David	IB	6-0	190	So.	Omaha, Neb. (Central)
29	Huston, Kellen	RCB	5-11	200	Jr.	Ankeny, Iowa
49	Ickes, Adam	BLB	6-2	225	So.	Page, Neb. (Orchard)
51	*Incognito, Richie	OT	6-3	300	So.	Glendale, Ariz. (Mount. Ridge)
31	Jackson, Joel	WR	5-10	190	Jr.	Papillion, Neb. (Papio-LaVista)
88	***Johnson, Trevor	RDE	6-4	255	Sr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Northeast)
94	***Kabongo, Patrick	NT	6-6	320	Sr.	Montreal, Que. (Vanier Prep)
49	Kadavy, Andy	FB	5-11	225	RFr.	Seward, Neb.
47	Keiser, Dusty	TE	6-3	240	Jr.	Norfolk, Neb. (Catholic)
49	Kenney, Tyler	WR	6-1	180	RFr.	Kearney, Neb. (Amherst)
27	Kniép, Phillip	FB	5-11	235	So.	Belleville, Kan.
46	Knopp, John	TE	6-3	245	So.	Lincoln, Neb. (Lincoln High)
75	Koch, Brandon	OG	6-3	310	So.	Gothenburg, Neb.
91	Koch, Sam	P	6-1	230	So.	Seward, Neb.
45	**Kriewald, Steve	FB	5-10	250	Jr.	Scotia, Neb. (N. Loup-Scotia)
95	Krug, Nathan	DT	6-4	245	So.	Chapman, Neb. (N. Christian)
19	**Larson, Kyle	P	6-0	205	Sr.	Funk, Neb. (Kearney)
10	*LeFlare, Mark	WR	5-11	185	So.	Omaha, Neb. (Central)
66	Leslie, Jermaine	OG	6-1	315	RFr.	Weatherford, Texas
43	Lewis, Kristopher	BLB	6-3	205	RFr.	Miami, Fla. (Dade Christian)
13	*Liley, Tim	WR	6-2	205	Sr.	Lakewood, Colo. (Mullen)
63	Limbaugh, Jack	C	6-4	285	Jr.	Algona, Iowa
15	Lindstrom, Brett	QB	6-0	190	So.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard West)
74	Lingenfelter, Newton	OT	6-6	265	RFr.	Plainview, Neb.
70	***Lohr, Jason	NT	6-2	285	Sr.	Tulsa, Okla. (Jenks)
12	Long, DeWayne	FS	6-0	210	Jr.	W.Des Moines, Iowa (Dowling)

76	**Loos, Chris	OT	6-3	290	Sr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
5	***Lord, Jammal	QB	6-2	220	Sr.	Bayonne, N.J.
65	Manley, Nate	OT	6-2	325	So.	Weeping Water (L. Christian)
64	Mann, Kurt	C	6-3	290	RFr.	Grand Island, Neb.
32	Matteo, Derek	FS	6-0	190	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard West)
76	McBride, Jeff	RDE	6-4	245	Jr.	Brule, Neb. (South Platte)
18	McLaughlin, Mike	WR	5-11	180	So.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
1	**McPherson, Lornell	RCB	5-9	175	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Central)
32	Miller, Grant	FB	6-0	225	RFr.	Peabody, Mass. (Veterans)
21	**Miller, Robin	IB	5-11	230	Sr.	Kent, Wash. (Kent-Meridian)
44	Moore, Jay	LDE	6-4	265	RFr.	Elkhorn, Neb.
84	Mulkey, Grant	WR	5-11	185	RFr.	Arlington, Texas
56	Neeman, Trevor	DE	6-2	235	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
61	Nelson, Brian	OG	6-4	320	Sr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard West)
24	O'Holleran, Jack	WR	5-10	205	Jr.	North Platte, Neb.
63	O'Shea, Matt	DT	6-0	270	So.	Irving, Texas (Jesuit Prep)
8	Ommert, Ryan	WR	5-10	195	Sr.	Cambridge, Neb.
13	Otto, Jamie	SS	5-11	195	Jr.	Norfolk, Neb. (Catholic)
82	**Peetz, Phil	TE	6-2	270	Sr.	Elkhorn, Neb.
66	Phillips, Jemayel	OT	6-6	365	RFr.	Winfield, La.
56	Pike, Gary	OT	6-4	320	So.	Pueblo, Colo. (Centennial)
2	*Pikington, Ross	WR	6-0	199	So.	Ft. Collins, Colo. (Loveland)
31	***Pippens, Jerrell	FS	6-2	195	Sr.	Philadelphia, Pa. (W. Catholic)
25	Pittman, Kade	WR	5-11	200	Fr.	North Platte, Neb.
69	*Povendo, Nick	OT	6-3	300	Jr.	Keller, Texas
47	Probasco, Nate	WLB	6-2	225	RFr.	Scribner, Neb.
53	Reeves, Mitch	WLB	6-3	225	RFr.	Weston, Neb. (Wahoo Neum.)
29	Rexilius, Seth	WR	5-11	190	So.	Lincoln, Neb. (Christian)
28	***Ricketts, Pat	RCB	5-11	180	Sr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
24	Rigoni, Brandon	SS	5-6	180	RFr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
30	Robison, Joey	CB	5-9	170	So.	Bertrand, Neb.
22	*Ross, Cory	IB	5-6	215	So.	Denver, Colo. (T. Jefferson)
70	Rowe, Tyler	OG	6-2	295	So.	Arlington, Texas
38	**Ruud, Barrett	MLB	6-2	240	Jr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
42	**Safranek, Steve	MLB	6-1	240	Sr.	Omaha, Neb. (Gross)
54	Schott, Carson	OG	6-2	320	So.	Osceola, Neb.
85	Schroeder, Matt	WR	6-4	215	So.	Belden, Neb. (Laurel-Concord)
83	Septak, Chris	TE	6-3	255	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard West)
79	*Sewell, Josh	C	6-2	300	Sr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
80	Shada, Alex	TE	6-3	245	Jr.	Wahoo, Neb.
8	Shanle, Andrew	LCB	6-1	200	RFr.	St. Edward, Neb.
76	Shrader, Matt	DE	6-1	245	Jr.	Ravenna, Neb.
23	*Siegel, Shane	SS	6-2	220	So.	Grand Island, Neb.
54	*Siewers, Chad	BLB	6-3	230	Jr.	Valley, Neb. (New Mexico St.)
66	*Smith, Le Kevin	DT	6-2	305	So.	Macon, Ga. (Stratford Acad.)
12	Smith, Ronnie	WR	5-10	160	Fr.	Carson, Calif. (Narbonne)
35	Stamer, Dusty	IB	5-8	180	Jr.	Grand Island, Neb.
87	Starkebaum, Seth	WR	5-11	185	RFr.	Haxton, Colo.
16	**Stuntz, Mike	QB	6-1	200	Jr.	Council Bluffs, Iowa (St. Alb.)
55	**Tagoa'i, Junior	OG	6-2	300	Sr.	Hauula, Hawaii (St. Louis)
5	*Thomas, Benard	LDE	6-4	265	Jr.	E. Palo Alto, Calif. (St. Francis)
14	Thorne, Fred	CB	5-10	190	Sr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
25	Tiedtke, Blake	SS	5-10	195	So.	Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Jefferson)
57	Timm, Cory	OT	6-4	325	RFr.	Yutan
41	Todd, Dane	FB	5-10	235	RFr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
93	Toline, Tyler	LDE	6-2	240	Jr.	Wahoo, Neb.
35	Tomasevich, Curt	MLB	6-0	220	Jr.	Shelby, Neb.
68	***Vili Waldrop, Dan	OT	6-5	350	Sr.	Wilmington, Calif. (Banning)
53	Volk, Cody	OT	6-7	325	Sr.	Norfolk, Neb. (Battle Creek)
3	*Washington, Fabian	LCB	5-11	175	So.	Bradenton, Fla. (Bayshore)
72	Wells, Sam	OT	6-3	275	RFr.	Bloomington, Ill. (Normal)
43	Weltmer, Tim	FB	6-1	245	So.	Smith Center, Kan.
33	White, Seth	CB	5-10	195	Sr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
20	Wigert, Kiffin	WR	5-9	160	Jr.	Cheyenne, Wyo. (Central)
9	Williams, Delrick	SS	5-10	220	Sr.	Merrillville, Ind.
7	*Williams, Demorrio	WLB	6-1	210	Sr.	Longview, Texas (Kilgore Coll.)
34	Wingender, Andy	FB	5-10	250	Sr.	Omaha, Neb. (Mt. Michael)
44	Woodward, Matthew	TE	6-2	225	So.	Jefferson City, Mo.
3	*Zajicek, Ben	SE	6-0	210	Jr.	Beatrice, Neb.

* — indicates letters earned

QUICK HITS

News, Notes And Quotes From Nebraska Football

BOTTOM LINE

Although sophomore David Horne emerged from the spring atop the depth chart at I-back, competition will continue during two-a-days. However, "I don't think you can give five backs equal reps in the fall. It just doesn't work that way," Solich said. "To a degree, it's hard to do in spring ball."

Even so, senior Josh Davis and sophomore Cory Ross will figure prominently.

Consistency is important, as is taking care of the ball. Both are crucial. "But there's going to be some subjectivity in the process of picking starters," said offensive coordinator Barney Cotton.

"Guys that will make plays may play ahead of guys that grade better."

The reasoning behind that is simple enough. "You'd sure like to be able to go out and score on 12- to 15-play drives every time, but you've also got 12 to 15 chances for something to go wrong," Cotton said. "A lot of times a 5-yard penalty or a bad snap will stop the drive."

"So you're looking to do something with the personnel you put on the field to give you a chance to get a 25-yard-plus play and be able to score in fewer play opportunities."

The coaches also are looking for a total package at I-back. "You want a guy that's explosive, that's able to make big plays, that's able to get the tough yards after contact, get the short-yardage gains, come out of the backfield and catch passes and pass pro," said Solich. "That's an awful lot to ask. But great backs are able to do it all."

IT'S DIFFERENT, ALL RIGHT

Defensive coordinator Bo Pelini spent the last nine years in the NFL, three years as a defensive assistant with the San Francisco 49ers, three years as linebackers coach for the New England Patriots and three years as linebackers coach for the Green Bay Packers.

The college environment is "different in a lot of ways, dramatically different," he said early in the spring, for "a lot of reasons. You're dealing with guys that have been around the game a little bit more. Things are just a lot more precise because they've done it over and over, for a lot of years."

However, coaching principles remain the same.

"The things that are going to make you good, the things we're going to have to do, aren't any different," Pelini said. "I'm not going to coach any different, and neither are any of the other coaches. It looks different to me. But, you know, the same things are going to make us good."



Jack O'Holleran

SPRING SURPRISE

Jack O'Holleran, a junior walk-on from North Platte, Neb., was among the pleasant surprises in the spring, emerging atop the depth chart at the "z" wide receiver position.

"I think Jack probably was the most consistent of the players at that position," said Solich.

O'Holleran, who began his career as an I-back, took his rise on the depth chart in stride. Even though he had climbed to the No. 1 spot prior to the Red-White intrasquad game, he didn't tell his friends back home because "you never know when it will change," he said.

"I just decided if it came out and I was still on top, everybody would find out then."

When the post-spring depth chart was released, "I had a lot of my friends call and congratulate me," said O'Holleran. "I'm sure they were surprised. When I go back home, I have a lot of people asking me where I'm at (on the depth chart). It's kind of nice not to have to explain it."

An uncle, Mike O'Holleran, is especially interested in his progress, calling "about every week" from the San Francisco Bay area to check in on his nephew's progress.

Mike O'Holleran lettered at fullback on Coach Tom Osborne's first team in 1973.

NO INTEREST IN QUARTERBACK

Adam Carriker, another of the pleasant surprises in the spring, might have stayed closer to his home and gone to Oregon State if the Beavers hadn't recruited him as a quarterback.

"I didn't want to play quarterback," said the redshirt freshman from Kennewick, Wash., who finished second on the depth chart to senior Trevor Johnson at right defensive end.

Carriker played quarterback for three years in high school and the first two years, "I was going to go to college as a quarterback," he said. "Then I decided I didn't like it." Part of the problem was Kennewick High finished 0-9 his senior season, after losing its final eight games when he was a junior.

"My sophomore and junior years, we threw a lot," said the 6-foot-6, 260-pound Carriker.

With inexperienced receivers his senior year, "we ran the option," he said.

Despite his size — he weighed 220 then — he didn't play defensive end until that senior season. He took to defense quickly, however, because "I liked just being able to run and hit people," he said.



Chris Septak

PATIENCE PAYS OFF

Chris Septak was among those pictured on the cover of the Huskers Illustrated 2000 recruiting issue. The Omaha Millard West senior was rated among the nation's top high school tight ends.

Prep Star named him No. 5. SuperPrep placed him No. 9.

Septak didn't expect to play as a true freshman. With tight ends such as Tracey Wistrom and Aaron Golliday already at Nebraska, "I wanted to redshirt, get some strength," he said.

To that degree, Septak was patient, but not as patient as he would have to be. Three years later, he is still waiting to see significant action. He has suited up only a handful of times.

The problem has been injuries, which have plagued him since his second season.

Septak made it through spring healthy and is finally in a position to play. Looking back, "I think it helped me become a better person, knowing how to take things in stride, know that nothing's given to you," he said. "You've got to work through things. And I've worked through them."

"I've done everything I can to be where I'm at."

Septak and his high school coach, Dan McLaughlin, have been reunited. McLaughlin succeeded Tim Albin as the offensive graduate assistant, working with the offensive line.

NEANDERTHAL NAMES

Nebraska no longer distinguishes between wingbacks and split ends, "Neanderthal" designations, according to receivers coach Ron Brown. Over the years, the wingbacks and split ends in the Cornhuskers' system have become "pretty interchangeable," he said. "There's really probably very little difference between the two. We want them both to do pretty much all the blocking, all the receiving."

A true wingback "was a guy that lined up in the backfield a lot, was a ball carrier half the time" and would "swing out on passes," said Brown. In recent seasons, "we didn't run as much with the wingback on inside plays, counters and things like we used to back in the 70s and 80s."

The two positions "became a little more interchangeable, but we kept the names." ■

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2003

PLAYER CAPSULES

Capsules compiled by Steven Sipple

QUARTERBACKS

Jammal Lord, No. 5

6-2, 220, Sr.

Bayonne, N.J.

Lord started all 14 games last year and established school single-game and season quarterback records for both rushing and total offense . . . He accounted for 2,774 yards of total offense, eclipsing Eric Crouch's 2,625 yards during his 2001 Heisman season . . . Lord rushed for a record 234 yards against Texas and finished with 1,412 rushing yards on the season . . . Lord's rushing total was the most among the nation's quarterbacks . . . Lord came out of spring practice as the clear-cut leader at QB entering preseason practice.

Turner Gill's comment: "Jammal made progress in every phase this spring. He had good composure. He wasn't too high and wasn't too low. And he stepped up his leadership. He still needs to work on that, but I was pleased with his progress."

Mike Stuntz, No. 16

6-1, 200, Jr.

Council Bluffs, Iowa

Stuntz appeared in six games last season as Lord's backup and threw for 100 yards . . . Stuntz's most extensive action came in the fifth game, at Iowa State, where he completed 7 of 18 passes for 72 yards and rushed four times for 13 yards . . . Recruited as a quarterback, Stuntz played split end as a true freshman in 2001 . . . His signature moment came when he threw a 63-yard touchdown strike to Eric Crouch on a reverse play in NU's 20-10 win against Oklahoma.

Gill's comment: "You'll see some good stuff, then all of a sudden you'll see some inconsistency. But Mike made a little bit of progress late in spring camp."



I-BACKS

David Horne, No. 9

6-0, 190, So.

Omaha, Neb.

Horne burst on the scene midway through last season and gave the Nebraska ground game a spark . . . With the departure of senior Dahrran Diedrick, Horne is the leading candidate to take over the starting job . . . The Omaha Central graduate did not play in the first five games last season, but ended his redshirt season against McNeese State in game six . . . He finished his rookie year with 651 rushing yards and seven touchdowns while topping 100 yards three times . . . Horne's rushing total was the fourth best by a Husker freshman . . . Horne capped spring drills with a 10-carry, 50-yard performance in the Red-White Game.

Barney Cotton's comment: "David's a smooth runner. He came on and played his best football at the end of the spring. He's becoming a better runner inside the tackles. He started running better on draws, power plays and inside zone plays. He's got pretty decent hands, too."

Josh Davis, No. 1

5-11, 205, Sr.

Loveland, Colo.

Davis finished the spring tied with Cory Ross for No. 2 on the depth chart . . . Davis has established himself as one of the Big 12's top kickoff return men while serving as a backup I-back for the past two seasons . . . Last season, he carried 25 times for 162 yards and a touchdown . . . He was third on the team in receiving, with 10 catches for 58 yards . . . He returned 42 kickoffs for an average of 23.7 yards last season to rank 33rd nationally . . . He had five games with more than 100 yards in kickoff returns, including a school-record 186 yards on seven returns at Kansas State, highlighted by a season-long 53-yard return.

Cotton's comment: "He had a great start to the spring, and then a good finish. He's a slashing kind of runner, a good pass protector and he's good at catching the ball. He'll be a good third-down back."



Cory Ross, No. 22

5-6, 210, So.

Denver, Colo.

Ross impressed coaches in the second major scrimmage of the spring with an eight-carry, 49-yard performance . . . Last season, Ross rushed 35 times for 184 yards and two touchdowns . . . Ross opened the season with a season-best 44 yards on three carries against Arizona State, including a 34-yard touchdown . . . He added 27 yards in Game 2, against Troy State, and 42 yards in the third game, against Utah State, including a 13-yard TD run . . . His playing time dwindled when Horne came out of his redshirt season . . . Ross redshirted his first season at NU in 2001 after starring at Thomas Jefferson High School, where he rushed for 1,500 yards and 23 touchdowns during his senior season.

Cotton's comment: "I like the fact he makes quick decisions, and he's very good at getting yards after contact."

Robin Miller, No. 21

5-11, 215, Sr.

Kent, Wash.

Miller apparently is determined to end his college career on a strong note . . . He turned in the best overall performance on the team during Nebraska's pre-winter conditioning testing in January . . . His 10-yard dash time of 1.54 seconds ranked second on the team . . . He also ran a solid 4.68-second time in the 40-yard dash . . . In the second major scrimmage of the spring, Miller carried seven times for 32 yards against lower-unit defenses.

Cotton's comment: "Robin's a big-bodied kid with good speed and elusiveness."



FULLBACKS

Judd Davies, No. 4

6-0, 250, Sr.

Omaha, Neb.

Davies is one of the team's most experienced players, having started each of the past two seasons . . . His production was scaled back in 2002 as the Huskers' Big 12-leading running game focused on the quarterback and I-back . . . He carried 42 times for 193 yards, the fourth-best total on the team . . . In 2001, Davies rushed 40 times for 238 yards . . . He enters his final college season with 614 career rushing yards and nine touchdowns . . . The top day of his career was a 119-yard effort at Baylor in 2001.

Cotton's comment: "I think he's one of our bright spots offensively. We'd like to see him have an increased role in the offense this season. I think he's one of our better players."

DeAntae Grixby, No. 6

5-8, 215, Sr.

Omaha, Neb.

Grixby emerged from spring drills tied with Steve Kriewald for No. 2 on the depth chart . . . Grixby moved to fullback from I-back last season because NU was stockpiled at I-back . . . Grixby draws frequent praise for his physical style of play . . . Although he's somewhat small for a fullback, he packs a punch, according to teammates . . . Last season, Grixby rushed five times for nine yards . . . Grixby has been slowed throughout his college career by a slew of injuries.

Cotton's comments: "DeAntae was a nice surprise to me this spring. We debated whether to play him at I-back or fullback. But he latched on to fullback, and we feel fortunate to have two fullbacks with different strengths. DeAntae packs a lot of punch in a relatively small package."



Steve Kriewald, No. 45
5-10, 250, Jr.
Scotia, Neb.

Kriewald was sidelined for all of spring practice after undergoing ankle surgery . . . Kriewald backed up Judd Davies each of the past two seasons and contributed primarily as a lead blocker . . . Last season, Kriewald played in all 14 games and finished with six carries for 19 yards . . . He also saw extensive action on special teams as a member of NU's kickoff return and punt coverage teams while also serving as a blocker on extra points and field goals . . . In 2001, Kriewald earned two starts (Oklahoma, Kansas) when Davies went down with an ankle injury . . . He finished the season with 18 carries for 95 yards and a touchdown.

Cotton's comment: "Seeing what he did on film (in 2002) would lead me to believe he'll be a factor. He's a young guy and may very well be a big part of the future at that spot. I know he'll be in great shape going into this season, because I know how hard he's worked."



Dane Todd, No. 41
5-11, 225, RFr.
Lincoln, Neb.

Chuck Mizerski, Todd's coach at Lincoln Southeast, describes Todd as a "devastating blocker," saying Todd recorded more knockdown blocks than any fullback in school history . . . Despite a late-season injury, Todd rushed for 453 yards (7.9 per carry) in 2000, when Southeast captured the Class A state championship . . . He rushed for more than 400 yards and scored 12 touchdowns as a senior . . . He also started at middle linebacker as a senior, recording 130 tackles . . . Todd turned down a scholarship offer from Duke.

Cotton's comment: "Dane has a bright future. He's a physical guy with a very willing attitude. He's kind of a young version of what Nebraska fullbacks have been over the years."



"X" RECEIVERS

Ross Pilkington, No. 2
6-0, 190, So.
Fort Collins, Colo.

Pilkington broke Nebraska's freshman receptions record with 14 catches . . . He and tight end Matt Herian also set a freshman record with 301 receiving yards . . . The Sporting News named Pilkington to its All-Big 12 freshman team . . . Pilkington's 90-yard touchdown catch against Iowa State was the third-longest in school history, and Nebraska's longest pass play since 1965 . . . Pilkington had a season-high three catches for 54 yards in the sixth game, against McNeese State . . . Pilkington originally signed with Nebraska in 2000, but delayed enrollment while he played minor league baseball in the Colorado Rockies organization.

Ron Brown's comment: "He really had a good spring. He's a very versatile receiver and runs good routes. He's very powerful and has really improved his blocking. He has a chance to be a great blocker here before it's all over."



Tim Liley, No. 13
6-2, 205, Sr.
Lakewood, Colo.

Liley, a walk-on, missed all but one week of the spring with a hamstring injury . . . Liley appeared in six games last season but was limited by a broken thumb . . . Liley and walk-on Ryan Ommert are the only seniors in Nebraska's receiving corp . . . Competing for Mullen High School, Liley was a two-time Colorado state champion in the long jump.

Brown's comment: "Tim's a very tough, tenacious blocker. He played with a broken thumb all of last season, but he can catch the ball well."



Kade Pittman, No. 25
5-11, 200, Fr.
North Platte, Neb.

Pittman enrolled in school in January and went on scholarship at that time . . . As a senior at North Platte High School, Pittman rushed for 1,104 yards despite playing only six games before going down with a knee injury . . . He sprinted 40 yards in 4.41 seconds in the summer of 2002 at a Kansas State football camp, the fastest time among 400-plus players in attendance . . . He turned down scholarship offers from Nebraska-Omaha and Nebraska-Kearney . . . Finished fourth in the Nebraska state track meet with an 11.11-second time in the 100-meter dash.

Brown's comment: "He's really emerged quickly and has put himself in a great situation. He's a very good athlete with explosive power and speed. He made some great catches this spring, but he's still a young pup and makes some rookie mistakes. But he doesn't let the fear of making mistakes hold him back."



"Z" RECEIVERS

Jack O'Holleran, No. 24
5-10, 205, Jr.
North Platte, Neb.

After switching from I-back to receiver, O'Holleran played in no games as a redshirt freshman in 2001 and two as a sophomore in 2002 . . . He emerged atop the depth chart after an impressive spring . . . A walk-on, O'Holleran has never caught a pass in a game . . . He left North Platte High School as the all-time rushing leader for a career (3,334 yards, 39 touchdowns) and for a season (1,873, 25) . . . O'Holleran was good enough at baseball in high school to attract a partial scholarship offer from Nebraska.

Brown's comment: "He's made steady progress. He's a big and powerful kid — he can barely fit through my office door. But he has exceptional agility for a guy as thick as he is, and that manifests itself on the field."



Mark LeFlore, No. 10
5-11, 185, Soph.
Omaha, Neb.

LeFlore was one of five true freshmen to hit the field for Nebraska last season . . . He played in every game except the opener against Arizona State . . . He finished with six receptions for 24 yards and rushed four times for 80 yards . . . He scored a touchdown the first time he touched the ball as a Husker, racing 64 yards on a reverse against McNeese State . . . He earned his first start against Oklahoma State and rattled off a 29-yard gain on a reverse on NU's first snap.

Brown's comment: "It would have been nice to redshirt Mark last season. He needed more physical strength and needed to understand the pace of the game, but he showed his athletic ability. He's a guy who could become a game-breaker. He spent the month of May really working hard in the weight room. That had to take place. It was non-negotiable."



Ben Zajicek, No. 3
6-0, 210, Jr.
Beatrice, Neb.

Zajicek is coming off offseason abdominal surgery . . . He played in six games last season but never caught a pass . . . In 2001, he played in every game except against Oklahoma . . . He had one rush for minus-four yards at Kansas and one assisted tackle against Texas Christian . . . He's been a valuable special-teams player . . . He played in the Rose Bowl and had one carry for 10 yards . . . He was a three-year starter at I-back and free safety for Beatrice High School . . . His brother, Matt, played basketball at Nebraska-Kearney.

Brown's comment: "He's making excellent progress. He's powerful and explosive and has good hands and good speed . . . He's become a physically tenacious football player. He just has to stay healthy and continue to improve."



TIGHT ENDS

Matt Herian, No. 11 **6-5, 240, So.** **Pierce, Neb.**



With NU losing four tight ends to graduation, Herian will be counted on for significant production in 2003 after a big freshman season in 2002 . . . The Huskers plan to strive for more balance in 2003, and Herian's receiving skills could be a major part of the attack . . . He caught only seven passes last season, but four of the receptions went for touchdowns, and he averaged a remarkable 43 yards per catch . . . He was named to The Sporting News' All-Big 12 freshman team.

Cotton's comment: "Matt is just a lean runner. He's a real deep threat at tight end. We need to improve his zone receiving skills. His blocking improved during the course of the spring, but we still want him to become a more physical player."

Phil Peetz, No. 82 **6-2, 270, Sr.** **Elkhorn, Neb.**



Peetz appeared in 11 games last season, serving mostly on special teams . . . He now finds himself as the top backup behind Herian entering preseason camp, though two incoming freshmen — J.B. Phillips and Josh Mueller — could challenge for playing time . . . Peetz came to NU in 1999 as an interior defensive lineman, moved to rush end before the 2000 season, then moved to tight end during the spring of 2001 . . . At Elkhorn High School, he was a two-year starter on both sides of the ball, playing offensive tackle and nose guard.

Cotton's comment: "Phil is a very physical blocker. He was kind of a pleasant surprise for us during the spring. He did a particularly good job in two-man combination blocks with our tackles."

Chris Septak, No. 83 **6-3, 255, Jr.** **Omaha, Neb.**



Because of a slew of injuries, Septak is in his fourth year in the program without having stepped on the playing field . . . That will change in 2003 . . . He sat out his first season at NU, 2000, as a redshirt . . . Then, in 2001, he was sidelined by athletic pubalgia . . . The following spring, he hurt his shoulder diving for a pass, underwent surgery and missed all of last season . . . Septak was one of the most decorated members of NU's 2000 recruiting class . . . He was ranked among the nation's top 10 tight ends by Rivals.com, PrepStar and SuperPrep.

Cotton's comment: "We need to have a good summer out of Chris. He was a little rusty this spring, but he started coming on at the end of it. He has the speed to be a good receiver and the physical ability to be a good blocker."

LEFT TACKLES

Richie Incognito, No. 51 **6-3, 300, So.** **Glendale, Ariz.**



Incognito began spring drills at center but moved back to left tackle after the emergence of Josh Sewell at center . . . Incognito sat out about half of the spring for violating undisclosed team rules . . . In 2002, he started 13 games and posted the second-highest season-pancake (knockdown block) total in school history . . . The Sporting News and Football Writers Association of America named Incognito first-team freshman All-American . . . He was the first Husker offensive lineman to start the season opener as a freshman . . . He posted 28 knockdown blocks at A&M, the second-most ever by a Husker.

Cotton's comment: "He's a very high-energy, very physical player. He has a chance to be a dominant force as a Big 12 lineman."

Nick Povendo, No. 69 **6-3, 300, Jr.** **Keller, Texas**



Povendo played a key role last fall, serving as a backup at both tackle spots . . . He started two games but mostly alternated into the lineup behind starters Incognito and Dan Vili Waldrop . . . Povendo finished with 14 pancakes, including five against Utah State . . . He played in only one game as a redshirt freshman in 2001, missing several weeks of practice after being bit by a spider . . . After his senior season at Keller High School, SuperPrep magazine tabbed Povendo as the 12th-best offensive lineman in the nation.

Cotton's comment: "Nick's a guy who plays hard. He started to come on strong toward the end of spring practice. He still needs a good summer of working on his pass-protection skills."

LEFT GUARDS

Mike Erickson, No. 78 **6-4, 305, Jr.** **Omaha, Neb.**



Erickson started all 14 games last season as the replacement for departed All-American Toniui Fonoti . . . Erickson ranked third on the team in pancakes with 101 and had six double-figure pancake games, including four of the first six . . . He posted a career-high 16 pancakes at Texas A&M, where the Huskers recorded a school-record 110 pancakes as a unit in a 38-31 comeback triumph . . . Erickson made 14 pancake blocks against McNeese State as NU rushed for a season-high 444 yards . . . In 2001, Erickson was the only freshman on NU's top two offensive line units.

Cotton's comment: "He had kind of a slow start in the spring, but came on strong at the end. He had a real good last week. I expect him to play well this coming season."

Jake Andersen, No. 71 **6-1, 300, Jr.** **Littleton, Colo.**



Andersen appeared in six games last season and finished with seven knockdown blocks . . . His playing time will likely increase dramatically this season, as he'll be counted on to play both the left and right sides as the third guard in a three-man rotation . . . In 2001, Andersen played in just one game . . . He redshirted in 2000 . . . Andersen was named PrepStar All-American after playing both guard and center at Mullen High School in Denver . . . Andersen holds many of Mullen's records in the weight room.

Cotton's comment: "Jake's a smart player. It's good to have a guy who can play either spot. He's got a real good motor."

CENTERS

Josh Sewell, No. 79 **6-0, 300, Sr.** **Lincoln, Neb.**



Sewell was arguably the biggest surprise during spring drills . . . His progress at center allowed Incognito to concentrate mostly on playing left tackle, where Incognito started last season . . . Sewell spent three semesters at Indiana State, a Division I-AA program . . . He transferred to NU in January of 2001 and sat out the 2001 season . . . He appeared in five games last season as senior center John Garrison's backup . . . Sewell joined current Husker teammates Barrett Ruud and Chris Loos in helping lead Lincoln Southeast High School to a repeat state championship in 1998.

Cotton's comment: "Josh really cares about the game. He spends the extra time to be the best he can be. The biggest thing is, he takes really good first steps after the snap."

Kurt Mann, No. 64
6-4, 270, RFr.
Grand Island, Neb.

Mann sat out the 2002 season as a redshirt . . . Although Grand Island High School finished only 2-7 in 2001, Mann was still honored as a SuperPrep All-American . . . Rivals.com ranked Mann as the nation's No. 26 offensive lineman . . . He played center for the Islanders' state championship basketball team, averaging 12 points and 10 rebounds per game . . . He finished second in the state in the shot put as a sophomore and junior before winning the title as a senior.

Cotton's comment: "Kurt had a tough draw this spring blocking senior nose tackle Ryon Bingham every day. But he held in there. He has a ways to go. But he's an athletic kid with decent feet."



RIGHT GUARDS

Junior Tagoa'i, No. 55
6-2, 300, Sr.
Hauula, Hawaii

Tagoa'i was suspended indefinitely from the team April 29, several hours after being charged with assault and child neglect . . . As of early June, it remained unclear whether Tagoa'i would be with the team for the start of preseason drills . . . Tagoa'i was a member of the line in 2002, backing up both starting guards . . . Tagoa'i started the Independence Bowl when Wes Cody was sidelined by an injury . . . Tagoa'i finished the season in a tie for fifth on the squad with 91 knockdown blocks . . . He had 18 knockdown blocks against Texas A&M . . . Tagoa'i played in three games in 2001 after moving from defense . . . In 2000, Tagoa'i played in five games at nose tackle.

Frank Solich's comment: "I thought Junior may be a player that picked up technique-wise what Coach (Barney) Cotton was after as quickly as anybody and just demonstrated the kind of player that he can be."



Tim Green, No. 72
6-4, 325, Sr.
Omaha, Neb.

Green finished spring practice listed as the co-No. 2 right guard along with sophomore walk-on Brandon Koch of Gothenburg, Neb. . . . Green returned this spring after being sidelined the past three seasons by knee and back injuries . . . Green was battling Mike Erickson for the starting job at left guard last spring, but Green's back was limiting him somewhat . . . Then, last summer, Green's back gave out . . . Green and team doctors decided on a surgical procedure that involved shaving a disk . . . Coming out of Omaha Westside High School, Green turned down scholarship offers from Notre Dame, Florida State and Michigan, among others.

Cotton's comment: "He's trying to come back from injuries and struggled early in the spring. The biggest thing was getting back into pads and trying to re-familiarize himself with the game."



Jermaine Leslie, No. 66
6-1, 315, RFr.
Weatherford, Texas

Leslie, another through the Texas pipeline (from Weatherford), was considered the most likely of the freshman offensive linemen to play without redshirting because of his strength and fundamentals. But he has been hampered by injuries and was unable to practice in the spring, a fact that has left him behind in his development . . . In high school, Leslie played tight end as a sophomore and junior before switching to the line.



RIGHT TACKLES

Dan Vili Waldrop, No. 68
6-5, 350, Sr.
Wilmington, Calif.

Waldrop returns after starting the last two seasons . . . He has been fifth on the team in knockdown blocks each of the past two years . . . He was an honorable-mention All-Big 12 pick by the Associated Press last season . . . He recorded 91 knockdown blocks in 2002, including a career-high 24 against Texas A&M . . . In 2001, he posted 95 knockdowns in helping NU capture the NCAA rushing crown . . . In 2000, Waldrop appeared in 10 games, mostly on special teams, but also as a reserve left guard . . . He sat out 1999 as a redshirt.

Cotton's comment: "Dan was another good surprise in the spring. One of his weaknesses last season was his pass-protection. But this spring, he made dramatic improvement in that area. We're going to need a great year out of Dan."



Chris Loos, No. 76
6-3, 290, Sr.
Lincoln, Neb.

Loos has missed the last two seasons while recovering from a major knee injury suffered in December of 2000 . . . The injury required reconstructive surgery . . . Loos underwent arthroscopic surgery in both May and October of 2001 to reduce swelling, and in January of 2002, Loos had additional reconstructive surgery . . . That surgery kept Loos out of spring ball for the second straight year . . . He has continued battling, and his never-quit attitude has impressed coaches and inspired teammates . . . By the end of the 2000 season, Loos was No. 2 at left tackle after Jon Rutherford was lost to a season-ending knee injury in November . . . Then Loos went down.

Cotton's comment: "Chris is a tough kid. There were times this spring when he was limping around during practice and I couldn't believe he was out there. He never missed a practice. But by the end of spring, his knees were very sore."



Jemayel Phillips, No. 77
6-6, 365, RFr.
Winnfield, La.

Phillips finished the spring tied with Loos at No. 2 behind Vili Waldrop on the depth chart . . . Phillips raised eyebrows with his strong play on the scout team last season, often squaring off against senior rush end Chris Kelsay . . . As a senior at Winnfield High School, Phillips ranked 46th nationally among offensive tackles, according to Rivals.com . . . SuperPrep magazine named Phillips an All-American . . . Phillips was a four-year starter on a team that lost just six games during his career.

Cotton's comment: "We're still thinking about what might be Jemayel's best position. He can play either tackle or either guard spot. He played guard for a couple of our pass sets at the end of spring and looked like he had some aptitude there. He has a lot of potential."



PUNTER

Kyle Larson, No. 19
6-0, 205, Sr.
Funk, Neb.

Larson capped a good spring with a 51.5-yard average on two punts in the Red-White Game . . . He emerged as one of the Big 12's top punters in 2001, and was even more impressive in 2002 . . . Last season, he averaged 43.2 yards per punt to rank 11th nationally . . . He was one of 10 semifinalists for the Ray Guy Award, given to the nation's top punter . . . He was a second-team All-Big 12 pick by the league's coaches, high praise in the league that featured five of the nation's top 25 punters.

Solich's comment: "You've got to feel good about Kyle. We'll have the kind of athletes that we can put on the punt-protection and cover teams that we need. We have to make sure we get a guy who can return punts."



PLACE-KICKERS

Sandro DeAngelis, No. 22
5-8, 190, Jr.
Niagara Falls, Ontario



DeAngelis finished the spring atop the depth chart, but he'll engage in spirited competition in preseason camp with walk-on Dale Endorf and incoming freshman David Dyches . . . In the Red-White Game, DeAngelis missed his only attempt, a 21-yarder . . . DeAngelis sat out all of last season with a stress fracture in his left foot . . . He started four of the first five games in 2001 and hit 2 of 3 field-goal attempts on the season, with a long of 21 yards, while making 15 of 16 point-after tries . . . His most extensive action was against Notre Dame, when he kicked off five times, made three PATs and connected on field goals of 19 and 21 yards.

Jeff Jamrog's comment: "Once in a while Sandro will get down on himself. It's like a guy hitting a bad golf shot. You're going to have your ups and downs. You just hope you don't have too many low points."

Dale Endorf, No. 32
6-0, 210, Sr.
Wichita, Kan.



In the Red-White Game, Endorf, a walk-on, made field goals of 20 and 22 yards and missed from 44 and 30 yards . . . Endorf was a feel-good story at the close of the 2002 season, inheriting the starting job for the Colorado game when Brown was suspended and DeAngelis was injured . . . Endorf drilled two field goals, including a 49-yarder . . . Endorf didn't even join the team until last October.

Jamrog's comment: "He's not going to get rattled. He may make a 50-yarder, he may miss a 25-yarder, but he's going to bounce back. He's not going to get really down on himself."

LEFT CORNERBACKS

Fabian Washington, No. 3
5-11, 175, So.
Bradenton, Fla.



Washington could become one of the defense's stars . . . He'll be counted on heavily in 2003 . . . Washington began the 2002 season as a reserve but cracked the lineup as a left corner midway through the season . . . He led the team in pass breakups, setting a school record in that category (13) . . . He also had four interceptions . . . He was named second-team freshman All-American by The Sporting News and earned honorable mention All-Big 12 honors from the coaches.

Marvin Sanders' comment: "Now Fabian's getting an opportunity to learn some techniques and a system. I think you'll see some improvement. Last season he was able to get by a lot of his athletic ability."

Terrell Butler, No. 4
5-10, 190, Sr.
Austell, Ga.



Butler has played sparingly throughout his NU career, contributing mostly on special teams . . . Last season, he appeared in six games and made two tackles . . . In 2001, he appeared in seven games as a rover . . . In 2000, he was one of four true freshmen to see action, appearing in eight games as a corner . . . He was named prep All-American after starring on both sides of the ball at Pebblebrook High in Austell.

Sanders' comment: "Terrell improved tremendously during the course of the spring. He bought into our system right away. He showed up a lot on film."

RIGHT CORNERBACKS

Lornell McPherson, No. 1
5-9, 175, Jr.
Omaha, Neb.



McPherson finished tied with Pat Ricketts atop the post-spring depth chart . . . McPherson was limited in 2002 by a right shoulder injury . . . He finished with 17 tackles after making 29 as a freshman . . . He capped the 2002 season with four stops in the Independence Bowl . . . He has seen most of his action in the Huskers' nickel and dime packages . . . He has started seven games in the last two seasons, including four in 2002 . . . McPherson said his confidence improved significantly this spring.

Sanders' comment: "If I had his ability, I'd be confident, too. You add that now to the fact he's starting to understand what we're doing, and his potential is unlimited."

Pat Ricketts, No. 28
5-11, 180, Sr.
Omaha, Neb.



Ricketts has seen extensive action at cornerback each of the past three seasons . . . He opened the 2002 season as the starting left corner opposite senior DeJuan Groce but gave way to Fabian Washington after five games . . . Ricketts retained his Blackshirt for the remainder of the season, as he was used as a third corner in passing situations . . . He finished with 56 tackles to rank ninth on the team . . . He was also a member of the kickoff coverage unit.

Sanders' comment: "Pat's very intelligent and very coachable. He knows how to correctly apply the techniques as soon as I teach them."

Willie Amos, No. 27
6-0, 185, Jr.
Sweetwater, Texas



Amos missed all of last season as he rehabilitated a knee injury suffered in the spring of 2002 . . . Although he was at about 80 percent of full strength this past spring, he made progress, according to NU coaches . . . In 2001, Amos made seven starts at free safety and made four interceptions, returning one 20 yards for a TD against Kansas State . . . He missed three games in 2001 because of a hamstring injury.

Sanders' comment: "Our goal was to work him through the spring and have him 100 percent during the fall. I knew he would push himself through the spring; he wants to be back out there."

FREE SAFETIES

Josh Bullocks, No. 20
6-1, 200, So.
Chattanooga, Tenn.



Bullocks last season made a steady rise up the depth chart, starting the year listed third at free safety before officially taking over the starting role before the Nov. 2 Texas game . . . Bullocks appeared in all 13 games and made five starts in all . . . He finished with 48 tackles, three pass breakups, two quarterback hurries and one fumble recovery . . . He recorded a season-high seven tackles against McNeese State.

Sanders' comment: "Josh should be one of the top safeties in the Big 12 Conference this season. He's a tremendous young man both off and on the field."

Jerrell Pippens, No. 31
6-2, 195, Sr.
Philadelphia

Pippens has played a key role as a reserve in the secondary during the past two seasons and has also been a stand-out on special teams . . . He played in every game last fall as a reserve free safety and finished with 33 tackles, including 16 solo stops . . . In his return to his home state, Pippens made a career-high eight tackles . . . He added four tackles apiece against Utah State and McNeese State . . . Along with DeJuan Groce, Pippens served as a gunner on NU's punt coverage and was a key reason the Huskers allowed only 9.4 yards per return.

Sanders' comment: "He's a total-effort guy. But the first thing that comes to mind is he's a tremendous young man. He really, really wants to be a student of the game."



STRONG SAFETIES

Philip Bland, No. 21
5-11, 205, Jr.
Lafayette, Colo.

Bland earned starts at both free safety and rover last season, and earned honorable-mention all-conference honors . . . He finished third on the team with 84 tackles, including 44 solo stops . . . He closed the regular season with a career-high 13 tackles against Colorado, one of seven games in which he had seven or more stops . . . He added five pass breakups, and his only career interception sealed NU's 38-31 triumph at A&M . . . He missed the Independence Bowl with a hamstring injury and was held out of spring drills after offseason shoulder surgery.

Bo Pelini's comment: "I like his experience. From what I've seen, and I haven't worked directly with him yet, he seems like a smart player. He brings an element of toughness and experience. Hopefully, he can be one of our leaders."



Daniel Bullocks, No. 14
6-1, 200, So.
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Bullocks, the twin brother of Josh, gained valuable experience in the Cornhusker secondary in 2002 after beginning the season as a lower-unit player . . . He ascended to the top of the depth chart at rover at midseason, earning his first career start against McNeese State . . . Bullocks moved back into a reserve role after Philip Bland shifted to the rover spot midway through the season . . . Bullocks finished with 16 tackles, including a season-high three at Texas A&M . . . He forced a fumble at Oklahoma State.

Sanders' comment: "Daniel has a tremendous work ethic. He's a physical player. He'll hit you hard if he gets that chance."



Shane Siegel, No. 23
6-2, 210, So.
Grand Island, Neb.

Siegel, one of the team's best all-around athletes, appeared in all 14 games in 2002 and made 14 tackles . . . He played a key role as a reserve cornerback while also making critical contributions on special teams . . . He saw action on defense mostly when NU used multiple corners in obvious passing situations . . . He earned first-team academic All-Big 12 honors . . . A walk-on, Siegel redshirted in 2001.

Sanders' comment: "Shane's a tremendous athlete. He weighs 210 and runs an electronic 4.5-second 40. He has tremendous potential."



BUCK LINEBACKERS

T.J. Hollowell, No. 2
6-0, 230, Sr.
Copperas Cove, Texas

Hollowell made five tackles in the Red-White Spring Game . . . He split time with Demorrio Williams at weakside linebacker last season . . . Hollowell earned two starts and finished the season eighth on the team with 60 tackles . . . He made a career-high 10 stops against Iowa State and had six tackles apiece against Penn State and Kansas State . . . In 2001, he played in 12 games and had 26 tackles . . . He saw action in 11 games as a freshman, mostly on special teams, and recorded seven stops.

Pelini's comment: "T.J. had a good spring. I like him in our system. He's a good player in 'space,' and we're going to allow him to play a lot out there."



Ira Cooper, No. 11
6-2, 230, Jr.
Omaha, Neb.

Cooper seemed to embrace Nebraska's changes during the spring and will see more playing time in 2003 as he's also capable of playing middle linebacker in the new-look defense . . . He served in a reserve role at Sam linebacker each of the past two seasons while playing well on special teams . . . Cooper gained the most extensive playing experience of his college career in the Independence Bowl, when he started in place of flu-ridden senior Scott Shanle . . . Cooper responded with five tackles and a quarterback hurry.

Pelini's comment: "He had a really good spring. He showed me he's a good overall football player. He made a lot of improvement from day one of spring practice until the end of it."



Chad Sievers, No. 54
6-3, 230, Jr.
Valley, Neb.

Sievers is capable of playing each of the linebacker spots as well as rush end . . . He appeared to settle in at Buck at the end of spring drills after trying rush end . . . In 2002, Sievers served as Barrett Ruud's backup at Mike linebacker throughout the season, but was slowed early in the season by injury, then suffered a season-ending knee injury against Kansas in early November . . . He finished with 37 tackles, including two for losses.

Pelini's comment: "We have to find Chad a home. He looked better at linebacker as the spring went along. He finished the spring at Buck, but he has the intelligence and ability to play more than one spot."



MIDDLE LINEBACKERS

Barrett Ruud, No. 38
6-2, 240, Jr.
Lincoln, Neb.

Ruud is another player who seemed to embrace Nebraska's new defensive system . . . In 2003, Ruud won't play as close to the line of scrimmage as he often did in 2002, which should allow him more freedom to roam the field and make plays . . . Ruud was slowed by injuries much of last season, but started all 14 games and finished as the team's second-leading tackler with 91 stops . . . He was also second on the team in tackles for loss with 12 . . . He played in every game as a true freshman in 2001, finishing with 49 tackles.

Pelini's comment: "Barrett had an excellent spring. I like him a lot. He took to our coaching and made a lot of improvement. He'll be a good football player for us as long as he stays on track."



Steve Safranek, No. 42
6-1, 240, Sr.
Omaha, Neb.

Early last season, Safranek stepped up to the top backup spot at Mike linebacker when Ruud and Sievers battled injuries . . . Safranek responded with a career-high four tackles in the third game, against Utah State . . . He finished the season with six stops . . . Safranek admits his lack of speed explains his status as a walk-on . . . South Dakota State was the only school to offer him a scholarship.

Pelini's comment: "He had a decent spring. He's still learning. Time will tell, I guess. He'll compete in the fall, and we'll see what happens."



Stewart Bradley, No. 46
6-4, 260, RFr.
Salt Lake City, Utah

Bradley made a big impression during spring drills with a slew of big hits, including two whoppers in the Red-White Spring Game . . . He finished with nine tackles in the Spring Game . . . At Highland High School in Salt Lake City, he played quarterback despite being bigger than many linemen . . . He was also a standout rugby player in high school . . . NU assistant coach Ron Brown encountered Bradley while recruiting Bradley's Highland High teammate, Haloti Ngata.

Pelini's comment: "He's young and raw, but he has some tools. We'll see where that takes him."



WILL LINEBACKERS

Demorrio Williams, No. 7
6-1, 210, Sr.
Beckville, Texas
(Kilgore JC)

Williams last season made the difficult transition from junior college to the major-college game and led NU with 92 tackles . . . He made 11 starts and shared time with Hollowell . . . Williams made a strong first impression on Husker fans with a blocked punt in the opener against Arizona State . . . Williams also returned a blocked punt later in the game . . . He had four games with eight or more tackles, including a season-high 13 against Colorado.

Pelini's comment: "He had a good spring. He's an athletic kid that fits well into our system."



Lannie Hopkins, No. 40
6-2, 220, Jr.
Rowlett, Texas

Hopkins missed most of spring practice because he underwent surgery to correct a recurring groin injury . . . NU coaches expect Hopkins to be recovered in time for preseason camp . . . Hopkins also was sidelined with a groin injury in 2001 . . . He played safety last season, recording 24 tackles, before moving to linebacker for spring drills . . . He may be the team's most potent blitzer . . . He has played a prominent role on special teams.

Pelini's comment: "He's going to be ready for the fall, and he's going to play a lot of football for us. He's an athletic guy with some good tools."



Chad Buller, No. 39
5-11, 215, Sr.
Henderson, Neb.

Buller recorded four tackles in the Red-White Spring Game . . . In 2002, Buller was a key member of Nebraska's special teams, appearing in all 13 games . . . He finished with eight tackles . . . In 2001, Buller saw action in two games after not playing at all in 2000 . . . He redshirted in 1999.

Pelini's comment: "He had a nice spring. He's a smart player and he made a lot of improvement. He's an interesting guy. He set himself up well for the fall."



LEFT DEFENSIVE ENDS

Benard Thomas, No. 5
6-4, 265, Jr.
East Palo Alto, Calif.

Thomas sat out last season as a redshirt but figures to win the starting job here . . . He served as a backup during his first two seasons but chose to redshirt last year because the Huskers had a wealth of veterans at the position . . . He has nine career tackles, including one sack.

Pelini's comment: "Benard had a good spring. I think his strength is his versatility — he plays both the run and pass well. He has the tools to be a good football player."



Titus Adams, No. 96
6-3, 290, So.
Omaha, Neb.

Adams was one of five players to see extensive action last season in a deep Nebraska interior defensive front . . . He moved to the outside this spring . . . Last season, Adams appeared in 13 games and recorded 21 tackles, with a season-high five stops against Utah State . . . He added four tackles apiece against Kansas and McNeese State . . . Adams, extremely agile for his size, filled in at rush end against Kansas last season as the Huskers were limited at the position by injury.

Pelini's comment: "He had a good spring. He's making steady improvement. He needs to gain strength, but he's getting better."



RIGHT DEFENSIVE ENDS

Trevor Johnson, No. 88
6-4, 255, Sr.
Lincoln, Neb.

Johnson drew praise from coaches for his performance during the spring . . . NU needs Johnson to step up his play a notch . . . He was named the team's Lifter of the Year during spring ball . . . He started the 2002 season as a reserve but moved into the starting lineup midway through the season and averaged more than five tackles per game . . . His 11 tackles for loss tied for third on the team . . . He had two sacks in the first half of the Independence Bowl, but sat out the second half with a concussion.

Jamrog's comment: "If you watch his junior tape and then watch his senior tape, hopefully you're going to see a different player."



Adam Carriker, No. 90
6-6, 260, RFr.
Kennewick, Wash.

Nebraska was hit hard by graduation at defensive end, so Carriker eased some of the Husker coaches' concerns this spring when he started hitting ball carriers hard . . . He recorded a total of four sacks in the first two major scrimmages . . . He played both rush end and quarterback at Kennewick High School . . . He's big, quick and agile . . . He was born in Hastings, Neb.

Jamrog's comment: "He's someone we're going to have to count on next season to play some awful good football for us."



Brandon Greeson, No. 99
6-3, 315, RFr.
High Point, N.C.

Greeson started all four years for Central High School in High Point . . . Rivals.com ranked him No. 38 among the nation's senior defensive tackles . . . In his final three seasons at Central, he earned all-city, all-area and all-conference honors, totaling 150 tackles each season, with at least 10 sacks, 30 tackles for loss and five pass breakups . . . He was also the starting center and team captain of his basketball team, averaging 12 points and 15 rebounds.

Pelini's comment: "He's a big guy who can move a little. His big body is his biggest asset. We'll see what that equates to in the fall."



NOSE TACKLES

Ryon Bingham, No. 59
6-3, 290, Sr.
Sandy, Utah

Bingham started all 14 games at nose tackle in 2002 and saw significant action at the position in 2001 . . . Bingham last season finished with 67 tackles, the most among Husker linemen, and was tied for fifth on the team with nine tackles for loss . . . He had 1.5 sacks for 18 yards in losses . . . He posted a career-high 10 stops at Kansas State . . . In 2001, he finished with 18 tackles, including five for losses.

Pelini's comment: "He's tough and strong. Just a good overall player."



Patrick Kabongo, No. 94
6-6, 320, Sr.
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Kabongo moved into the starting lineup midway through last season . . . He finished sixth on the team with 62 tackles, the second-best total among Husker linemen . . . He posted nine tackles for loss, including two sacks . . . He added five quarterback hurries, caused a fumble and broke up a pair of passes at the line of scrimmage . . . He's one of the team's biggest players but retains OK mobility.

Pelini's comment: "This spring, he played a little more nose tackle than he has in the past. It gives us a big presence in the middle, and we needed some help there."



Jared Helming, No. 73
6-3, 290, So.
Springfield, Mo.

Helming has been slowed by injury since arriving on campus, but showed some good signs this spring . . . He was a consensus prep All-American at Kickapoo High School . . . As a senior at Kickapoo, he had 25 tackles for loss, including three sacks, as his team advanced to the state semifinals . . . He played for Kurt Thompson, the former coach of Grant and Tracey Wistrom at Webb City (Mo.) High School.

Pelini's comment: "Jared is developing. He's made some improvements. He could be a guy who can help us."



DEFENSIVE TACKLES

Le Kevin Smith, No. 66
6-2, 305, So.
Macon, Ga.

Smith recorded five tackles in the Red-White Spring Game . . . Last season, he played in all 14 games and finished with 42 tackles, including 16 solo stops, to earn first-team freshman All-Big 12 honors from The Sporting News . . . He had a season-best five tackles against Kansas and capped his freshman season with four tackles and two quarterback hurries in the Independence Bowl . . . He suffered an ACL injury during preseason camp as a true freshman, then tore the ACL in his other knee in the spring of 2002. He now appears fully recovered.

Pelini's comment: "Le Kevin had a very good spring. He's big and athletic — he plays both the run and pass well. He has a chance to develop into a pretty good player."



Seppo Evwaraye, No. 97
6-5, 320, So.
Laurel, Neb.

Evwaraye practiced during the spring but was limited by a shoulder injury . . . Dogged by injuries last season, Evwaraye finished with only three tackles . . . He was slowed by a foot injury, knee soreness and a hip problem . . . Coaches hope he's fully recovered for 2003 . . . He sat out 2001 as a redshirt . . . A native of Finland, he came to the United States as an exchange student in 1999.

Pelini's comment: "Seppo wasn't fully healthy this spring, but he's moving in that direction. We'll see where it takes him. He's a guy we're counting on to give us quality snaps."



Jason Lohr, No. 70
6-2, 290, Sr.
Tulsa, Okla.

Lohr, who's missed most of the last two seasons with two major knee injuries, in April was granted a sixth year of playing eligibility by the NCAA . . . Lohr tore a knee ligament against Notre Dame in 2001 and was granted a fifth year of eligibility, then suffered a ligament injury to the same knee last fall before the season began . . . He practiced in pads this spring . . . In 2000, Lohr started every game and made 46 tackles, including two sacks.

Jamrog's comment: "He's going to be a little rusty, because he hasn't played in a game in two years, but he's an excellent football player. He's an excellent technician, plays the run awfully well and no doubt will be a big benefit if he can come back 100 percent, which we hope will happen."



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RECRUITING

Nebraska Seeks Linebacker Help

Husker coaches looking to build depth at all three positions

By Doug Horwich

Linebacker recruits have been scarce at Nebraska since the class of 2000, which featured four highly touted players in Jason Richenberger, Ira Cooper, T.J. Hollowell and Lannie Hopkins.

Of those four, three remain in the program, and two of those will be on the team in 2004.

In the three recruiting seasons that followed, only five linebackers have been signed, in addition to transfer Chad Sievers, leaving the depth charts at the three linebacker positions somewhat thin and lacking in young talent going into next season.

For these reasons, the 2004 recruiting class is expected to include a minimum of three linebacker recruits, and perhaps as many as five, distributed among the Will, Mike and Buck positions.

An emphasis on speed is also likely to be the focus of new defensive coordinator Bo Pelini and linebackers coach Jimmy Williams.

Nebraska's championship teams of the 1990s consistently featured a great deal of speed at the linebacker



Lance Brandenburg (left) of Overland Park, Kan., and Marcus Freeman of Huber Heights, Ohio, are among the linebacker prospects considering NU.

spots — especially on the outside, and this trait has been somewhat lacking on the Husker teams of the past few years.

Pelini and Williams' NFL pedigree has also had an early impact on a number of the linebacker prospects the Huskers are recruiting, as both men know what it takes to play the position at the highest level. Despite his inexperience as a recruiter, Pelini is clearly off to a good start and has made a very favorable impression on recruits.

One player who has already expressed a great deal of interest in Nebraska is inside linebacker Lance Brandenburg (6-foot-1, 215 pounds, 4.7-second 40-yard dash time) from St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Overland Park, Kan. He has been offered by the Huskers and currently has Nebraska at the top of his list.

Brandenburg broke St. Thomas Aquinas' school record as a sophomore with 155 total tackles. He then

shattered his own record as a junior with 193 tackles (62 unassisted), in addition to four sacks, three blocked kicks and one interception.

One advantage in Nebraska's favor is that Brandenburg was born in the state and still has relatives there.

"All I know right now is that Nebraska is on top," he said. "I was born there (in York, Neb.). I have a lot of family there. They have offered me.

"I've just always been a fan, and my cousin (Mike Heins) played there. I grew up a fan of them, and they have a great program. They are my favorite team to watch on TV.

"After Nebraska, I couldn't narrow it down. Maybe it would be Kansas State, Colorado and Notre Dame who would come next, but my top eight are Nebraska, Kansas State, Kansas, Colorado, LSU, UCLA, Notre Dame and Northwestern."

Brandenburg will be attending Big Red Football Camp this summer and may be looking to make an early commitment in order to concentrate on his senior season.

"The Nebraska offer is tempting, but right now I'm going to wait," he said. "It would be ideal to commit before my football season began though. Then, I could concentrate on my season and winning the state championship. I'll probably go to a few camps and then see how I feel before I commit."

Another top linebacker prospect

drawing a great deal of interest from the Husker staff is Marcus Freeman (6-2, 240, 4.7) from Wayne High School in Huber Heights, Ohio. Freeman also has been offered by Nebraska and lists the Huskers among his top five choices, along with Southern California, Oklahoma, Miami and Notre Dame.

After a stellar junior campaign in which he registered 152 tackles, including 29 tackles for loss, he is likely to be one of the most highly recruited linebackers in the nation. Pelini has handled his recruiting, and the two have hit it off well.

"I like Coach Pelini, knowing that he coached in the NFL," Freeman said. "He told me that I could play outside and that I might be able to help them early.

"It just seems like Nebraska is in the running for the national championship every year and that they'd be a good bridge to the NFL. I like them a lot. They've been writing me handwritten stuff for a while now."

Competition for Freeman's signature will be intense, however, as he continues to receive written offers on a daily basis and is being courted by the majority of the top programs in the country.

Another inside linebacker prospect who is high on Nebraska is Matt Stoltz (6-3, 230, 4.7) from Pulaski Academy in Little Rock, Ark. Stoltz is one of a number of players who has been offered by Nebraska, and the Husker staff appears to be focusing intently on this talent-rich area under new recruiting coordinator Scott Downing.

Although Stoltz does not currently list a favorite, Nebraska is clearly one of his top choices, in addition to LSU, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Virginia. Although he likes the home-state Razorbacks, they don't appear to have an edge over any of his other favorites at this time.

Stoltz had a productive junior season last year, considering that he suffered a broken ankle during the week prior to the first game of the season and only played in seven games. Despite the shortened season, he still managed to register 103 tackles (11 for loss), eight quarterback hurries, four sacks, three fumble recoveries and three forced fumbles. Stoltz also led the state of

An Early Wish List for Class of 2004

By Rick Shaw

After spring football wrapped up, the Nebraska football staff hit the recruiting trail. By mid-May, the Husker staff had extended more than 50 scholarship offers to blue-chippers across the country.

Here's an early look at eight prospects that are high on the coaches' wish list, as the Huskers begin to lay the groundwork for the recruiting class of 2004:

— **Lance Brandenburg, linebacker, Overland Park (St. Thomas Aquinas), Kan.:** The 6-foot-1, 215-pound tackling machine out of Kansas favors the Huskers early over Kansas, Kansas State, Colorado, and Missouri.

— **Jeff Byers, center, Loveland, Colo.:** Byers is one of the nation's top high school offensive linemen heading into the 2003 campaign. The 6-4, 270-pound big man from Colorado already had 22 offers by the first week in May. Byers took an unofficial visit to Nebraska in April and will attend the Husker summer camp for the third year in a row in June. He hails from the same high school as current Huskers Josh Davis and Ross Pilkington.

— **Cortney Grixby, cornerback, Omaha (Central), Neb.:** This 5-10, 165-pound speedster from Omaha already claims scholarship offers from Nebraska, Kansas, Kansas State, Colorado, Iowa, UCLA, and Wyoming. With a 4.3 second 40-yard dash and a 38-inch vertical jump to his credit, the offers should continue to roll in. Grixby is also entertaining college basketball offers from Nebraska and Tennessee-Chattanooga. Grixby, the brother of Husker fullback DeAntae Grixby, hopes to have a decision made by as early as this summer.

— **Peyton Hillis, fullback, Conway, Ark.:** The 6-2, 240-pounder was a man among boys as a junior all-state fullback. A throwback to the bruising fullback of old, Hillis is intrigued by the run-style offense at Nebraska. Nebraska has offered and leads early over Arkansas, Colorado, Auburn, Tennessee, and Oklahoma State.

— **Rory Johnson, outside linebacker, Vicksburg, Miss.:** The 6-2, 215-pound Johnson recorded 181 tackles and 17 sacks as a junior in 2002. With 4.4-second speed in the 40, Johnson is an attractive prospect to college recruiters. He plans to camp at Nebraska this summer and list the Huskers along with Ole Miss, Mississippi State, West Virginia, and Southern Mississippi as some of his early favorites.

— **Shae Reagan, quarterback, Idalou, Texas:** The 6-3, 231-pound signal caller rushed and passed for more than 1,000 yards as a junior. The multi-purpose quarterback garnered early scholarship offers from Colorado, Notre Dame, and Oklahoma State, in addition to Nebraska. Reagan lists Nebraska as one of his early favorites.

— **Michael Tate, defensive end, Tulsa (Washington), Okla.:** The 6-4, 241-pound Tate sports a 4.6 40 time and an early offer from Arkansas. Tate grew up cheering for the Huskers and admits that, with an offer, the Huskers would be the team to beat. Tate is also getting early attention from Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Missouri and Texas A&M.

— **Darius Walker, running back, Buford, Ga.:** The 5-11, 195-pound Walker lists Nebraska as his childhood favorite and plans to take one of his five official visits to Lincoln. He also is considering early offers from Arkansas, LSU, Maryland, Notre Dame, and Stanford. ■

Rivals.com's Preseason 100 Players to Watch

(Listed alphabetically)					
Name	Pos.	Ht./Wt.	Hometown/school		
1. Rhyen Anderson	DL	6-6/265	Oak Creek, Wis.	50. Jon Ioane	OL 6-5/335 Tustin, Calif.
2. Eric Andino	LB	6-4/225	Arlington Hgts, Ill./Buffalo Hgts	51. Terrell Jackson	RB 5-9/190 Corona, Calif./Centennial
3. Rameses Arceo	OL	6-4/294	Santa Fe Springs, Calif./St. Paul	52. Tyson Jackson	DL 6-6/265 Edgard, La./West St. John
4. Adrian Arrington	WR	6-4/180	Cedar Rapids, Iowa/Washington	53. Dwayne Jarrett	WR 6-4/205 Brunswick, N.J./Brunswick
5. Robert Ayers	LB	6-3/235	Bennettsville, S.C./Marlboro Co.	54. Derrick Jones	WR 6-0/170 Long Beach, Calif./Poly
6. Tony Bell	LB	6-3/205	Thompson, Ala.	55. Dwayne Jones	RB 6-1/233 Toms River, N.J./North
7. Jean Beljour	RB	6-0/190	Hackensack, N.J.	56. Terrence Jones	ATH 5-10/180 Sarasota, Fla./Booker
8. Rhett Bomar	QB	6-4/205	Grand Prairie, Texas	57. Xavier Lee	QB 6-4/200 Daytona Beach, Fla./Seabreeze
9. Brett Bowers	DB	6-1/192	Jacksonville/Trinity Christian	58. Chris Long	DL 6-4/262 Charlottesville, Va./St. Anne's
10. Brandon Braxton	OL	6-6/300	Youngstown, Ohio/Ursuline	59. Mike Massey	DL 6-5/225 Cleveland/St. Ignatius
11. Brian Brohm	QB	6-4/205	Louisville, Ky./Trinity	60. Eric McClendon	DL 6-6/288 Vidalia, Ga.
12. Andre Brown	ATH	6-1/210	Greenville, N.C./Ross	61. Stephen McGee	QB 6-3/205 Burnet, Texas
13. David Brown	DL	6-3/255	Madison, Ala.	62. Bradis McGriff	OL 6-6/303 Vallejo, Calif.
14. Thomas Brown	RB	5-10/185	Tucker, Ga.	63. Ryan Miller	OL 6-6/290 Lake Charles, La./Barbe
15. Alonzo Bryant	QB	6-2/185	Fort Valley, Ga./Peach Co.	64. Zach Miller	TE 6-4/245 Phoenix/Desert Vista
16. Michael Bumpus	WR	6-0/185	Culver City, Calif.	65. Anthony Morelli	QB 6-4/208 Pittsburgh/Penn Hills
17. Jeff Byers	OL	6-4/270	Fort Collins, Colo./Loveland	66. William Morrissey	DL 6-3/270 Silsbee, Texas
18. Tyler Campbell	RB	6-1/182	Austin, Texas/Westlake	67. Lydon Murtha	OL 6-8/315 Hutchinson, Minn.
19. Dorian Capers	DL	6-6/275	Beaufort, S.C./Battery Creek	68. Franklin Okam	DL 6-5/295 Richardson, Texas/Lake Hglds
20. Tony Carter	DB	5-10/170	Jacksonville/Mandarin	69. Chris Patterson	LB 6-4/220 Chicago/Hubbard
21. Xavier Carter	WR	6-3/190	Palm Bay, Fla.	70. Chase Patton	QB 6-4/205 Columbia, Mo./Rock Bridge
22. Jeremy Ciulla	OL	6-6/275	Kennesaw, Ga./Kennesaw Mt.	71. Adrian Peterson	RB 6-2/205 Palestine, Texas
23. Cameron Colvin	WR	6-2/191	Concord, Calif./De La Salle	72. Nathan Peterson	DL 6-3/235 Tulsa, Okla./Union
24. Dan Connor	LB	6-3/215	Wallingford, Pa./Strath Haven	73. DeMario Pressley	DL 6-4/285 Greensboro, N.C./Dudley
25. Paul Crews Jr.	DB	5-11/172	Henderson, N.C./North Vance	74. Ryan Pond	QB 6-2/225 Chesapeake, Va./W. Branch
26. D.J. Davis	ATH	5-11/182	Fort Worth, Texas/Dunbar	75. Chilo Rachal	OL 6-6/310 Compton, Calif./Dominguez
27. Fred Davis III	WR	6-4/210	Toledo, Ohio/Rogers	76. Robert Reid	QB 6-3/224 Houston/North Shore
28. Early Doucet	WR	6-2/210	St. Martinville, La.	77. Kyle Riggs	OL 6-7/295 Fostus, Mo.
29. Matt Eichelberger	OL	6-5/325	Bellingham, Wash./Seahome	78. Keith Rivers	LB 6-2/220 Lake Mary, Fla.
30. Randy Estes	DB	6-2/200	Los Alamitos, Calif.	79. Darrell Robertson	DL 6-5/215 Jonesboro, Ga.
31. Sekeli Faaeteete	ATH	6-1/212	San Leandro, Calif.	80. A.Q. Shipley	DL 6-3/275 Coraopolis, Pa./Moon
32. Alex Fletcher	OL	6-4/275	Long Island, N.Y./St. Anthony's	81. Chris Smith	DL 6-5/230 Allen, Texas
33. Marcus Freeman	LB	6-3/230	Huber Heights, Ohio/Wayne	82. B.J. Stabler	OL 6-5/295 Grove Hill, Ala./Clarke Co.
34. Rodney Gallon	LB	6-1/210	Tallahassee, Fla./Lincoln	83. Nikita Stover	WR 6-2/205 Hartselle, Ala./
35. Eugene Germany	LB	6-4/250	Pomona, Calif.	84. Jae Thaxton	LB 6-3/225 Hartwell, Ga./Hart. Co.
36. Ted Ginn Jr.	DB	6-0/170	Cleveland/Glenville	85. Walter Thomas	OL 6-6/330 Galveston, Texas/Ball
37. Willie Glasper Jr.	DB	6-0/185	Concord, Calif./De La Salle	86. Morgan Trent	DB 6-1/180 Orchard Lake, Mich./St. Mary's
38. Sean Glennon	QB	6-4/190	Chantilly, Va./Westfield	87. Brian Toal	LB 6-2/228 Ramsey, N.J./Bosco Prep
39. Cortney Grixby	DB	5-9/160	Omaha, Neb./Central	88. Rodney Van	DB 6-0/170 Long Beach, Calif./Poly
40. Greg Harrison	OL	6-5/295	Shenandoah Valley, Pa.	89. Darius Walker	RB 5-11/195 Buford, Ga.
41. Leon Hart	OL	6-4/290	Columbia, S.C./Spring Valley	90. George Walker	WR 6-1/190 Houston/Westbury
42. Lavelle Hawkins	WR	6-1/175	Stockton, Calif./Edison	91. Jamal Walker	RB 6-2/205 Palatine, Ill./Fremd
43. Kellen Heard	DL	6-6/335	Wharton, Texas	92. Marcus Walker	DB 5-11/180 Waco, Texas
44. Chad Henne	QB	6-3/210	West Lawn, Pa./Wilson	93. Ryan Walters	QB 6-0/190 Aurora, Colo./Grandview
45. Lamar Heron	RB	6-0/190	Sacramento	94. Bobby Washington	RB 6-0/200 Miami/Killian
46. Thomas Herring	DL	6-6/280	Los Angeles/Fremont	95. Jerald Watson	RB 5-11/205 Morgan City, La./Central Cath.
47. Donte Herrod	DB	6-2/200	Washington, D.C./Woodson	96. Drew Weatherford	QB 6-3/205 Land O'Lakes, Fla.
48. Rocky Hinds	QB	6-4/220	Playa Del Rey, Calif./St. Bernard	97. Kyle Williams	LB 6-3/220 Bolingbrook, Ill.
49. Cornelius Ingram	ATH	6-5/190	Hawthorne, Fla.	98. Kenny Wilson	RB 6-2/215 Liberal, Kan.
				99. D.J. Wolfe	RB 5-11/180 Lawton, Okla./Eisenhower
				100. Ryan Young	OL 6-6/303 Waco, Texas/University

Arkansas in tackles as a sophomore with 162.

The Husker staff will get an up-close and personal look at Stoltz this summer, as he plans to attend Nebraska's summer camp.

"I am going to camp at LSU, Arkansas and Nebraska," he said. "I will be going to three or four camps this summer. I have seven-on-seven

practices all summer. I won't have any time for unofficials, most likely."

Despite living in Southeastern Conference country, Stoltz has followed the Huskers for years and is attracted by the program's winning tradition.

"I've always watched them," he said. "They're a pretty sweet team, a powerhouse. I've never been up

there before to Lincoln to see the state or school."

Stoltz intends to be thorough in his evaluation of his favorite schools and has no plans of making an early decision.

"As of right now I will be visiting (Lincoln)," he said. "I am planning on taking all five visits before deciding." ■

'Each Guy is Different'

**More freshmen
find themselves in
position to play
without redshirting**

By Mike Babcock

Like most scholarship recruits, Jemayel Phillips expected to play as a true freshman. That expectation lasted "for maybe a day or two, until the first time I looked at the playbook," he said.

"Then I realized it was going to take a whole lot for me to play."

Phillips, an offensive tackle, was fundamentally sound. But there was much to learn, and though he was impressive physically, at 6-foot-6 and 330, he had to mature and get stronger.

So he spent his first season at Nebraska on the scout team. "All throughout high school, I was never on scout team," he said. "It was a humbling experience more than anything."

A majority of Phillips' Cornhusker teammates have shared that experience. And like Phillips, they're probably better off for it. "If I had to go back in time, I'd go through it again," he said.

Because of reduced scholarship numbers and other limitations placed on programs, however, more freshmen are finding themselves in a position to play without redshirting.

Nebraska used five true freshmen last season, the most during Frank Solich's five seasons as head coach and the most since 1997, when six contributed to a national championship.

"I've always been pretty open to that," said Solich. "The 85-scholarship limit forces you to be that way, but I think it's the nature of coaches to want to put the very best players on the field."

Coaches also "want to be able to put the best prepared players on the field," he said. "So coming from that angle, those that are able to combine it athletically and mentally have a chance."

Several true freshmen could play in 2003. A "number" attended the Spring Game, "and some of them came in early enough that they were able to take in the practice on Friday," Solich said.

"They're all about wanting the playbook. They're all about wanting



Matt Herian emerged as a big-play receiving threat as a true freshman with four touchdown catches.

(video)tape. They want as much as they can get to give themselves a little bit of an edge on what things are all about when they come into fall camp. So we'll do everything we can to help those guys be prepared."

Joe Dailey was among those who visited on the weekend of the Spring Game. And the quarterback from Jersey City, N.J., is prominent among those who could avoid a redshirt, particularly following the transfer of Curt Dukes. He's going to "get a look," said quarterbacks coach Turner Gill.

Dailey will be bucking tradition if he plays right away. Nebraska's quarterbacks have rarely played as true freshmen, with the notable exception of Tommie Frazier — who became the starter.

Gill, the standard by which Cornhusker quarterbacks were measured prior to Frazier, didn't play until his sophomore season. "I'd probably say I wasn't really ready as a true freshman," he said.

The process was different when Gill arrived in the late summer of 1980, of course. Nebraska had a freshman-junior varsity team, on which the majority of freshmen played.

Solich coached that team from 1979 to 1982, compiling a 19-1 record.

The Cornhuskers' junior varsity teams always included mostly freshmen, which had to be the case for every program until 1974, when NCAA rules allowed junior varsity instead of fresh-

man teams. Prior to 1972, freshmen were prohibited from varsity competition and so had their own teams.

While most schools had scrapped freshman-junior varsity programs by the late 1980s, Nebraska continued to field a team until NCAA limits on coaching staffs made it unfeasible.

The freshman-junior varsity program was discontinued in February of 1991, then resurrected briefly in 1993, when Coach Tom Osborne agreed to a two-game, home-and-home series against the Air Force Academy jayvees, as a favor to Falcons' coach and friend Fisher DeBerry.

In early October of 1993, the Nebraska jayvees, under the direction of redshirted freshman quarterback Matt Turman, defeated the Air Force jayvees 49-20 at Memorial Stadium.

Graduate assistants Gerry Gdowski and Bill Busch coached the Cornhusker jayvees, who practiced together only once before playing the game. The second game, which was scheduled to be played at Colorado Springs in mid-November, was canceled because of a snowstorm.

From 1956, when records first were kept, until 1990, the final official season, Nebraska's freshman-junior varsity compiled a 120-17-1 record, with only one losing season, 2-3 in 1987.

Walk-ons played a significant role in that success, particularly after the NCAA lifted its restriction on redshirting freshmen in 1978. Until then, most Cornhusker recruits played on the junior varsity team their first season and then redshirted the second. That process didn't change immediately, but eventually, scholarship linemen were most likely to play on the junior varsity as freshmen.

Freshmen at other positions would redshirt, typically, and then play.

The 1980 freshman-junior varsity team included the recruiting class that was the foundation of the "Scoring Explosion" in 1983 and went 5-0, outscoring opponents 257-69.

Gill completed 34-of-52 passes for 679 yards and eight touchdowns. His favorite receiver was wingback Irving Fryar, who caught 16 passes for 432 yards and five touchdowns.

Both had the talent to play with the varsity. But "I would say I was not ready at that particular time," said Gill, who had the final say in the decision. "Each guy is different."

Nebraska benefited in many ways from its freshman-junior varsity program, in addition to allowing players

True Freshmen Who Have Played in Solich Era

1998

Keyuo Craver, CB — four-year letterman, All-America honors, co-captain

Jason Lohr, DL — starter before missing nearly two seasons because of knee injury, sixth-year senior

Jeremy Slechta, DL — four-year letterman, two-year starter, Academic All-Big 12, co-captain

1999

John Garrison, C — four-year letterman, two-year starter, co-captain

Toniu Fonoti, OL — All-American, Outland finalist, Lombardi semifinalist, left early for NFL

Taylor Gehman, DB — career ended by injuries, went on medical scholarship

2000

***T.J. Hollowell, LB** — three letters, alternated last season, moved to Buck in spring

Terrell Butler, DB — lettered last season, second on post-spring depth chart at left corner



Fabian Washington became a starter as a true freshman.

Willie Amos, DB — two letters before severe knee injury, starter, expected back in the fall

***Benard Thomas, DE** — two letters, redshirted last season, solid spring

2001

Mike Stuntz, QB — two letters, wide receiver as freshman, No. 2

quarterback going into fall

***Barrett Ruud, LB** — two letters, returning starter at middle line-backer

Philip Bland, S — two letters, returning starter at safety, Academic All-Big 12

Manaia Brown, DL — transferred to Brigham Young after lettering first season

2002

***David Horne, IB** — pulled from redshirt, alternated, rushed for 651 yards, 7 TDs

Mark LeFlore, WR — scored TD first time he touched the ball, 64-yard reverse, six catches

***Ross Pilkington, WR** — freshman-record 14 catches for 301 yards, tied for second-most on team

***Matt Herian, TE** — seven catches for 301 yards and four touchdowns

***Fabian Washington, CB** — 11 starts, 13 pass break-ups, four interceptions, one TD return

*Finished spring No. 1 on depth chart (Bland & Lohr not listed because of injuries)

to make the transition from high school by competing against others at their level of physical and emotional maturity, it developed a winning attitude that carried over.

As a result, by the mid-1980s, the Cornhuskers couldn't schedule other Big Eight freshman-junior varsity teams and had to turn to junior colleges for their four or five opponents.

In 1992, for cost-cutting reasons, the NCAA began reducing football scholarships, going from 95 to 92, to 88 the next year and then to the current 85 the year after that. In addition, coaching staffs were reduced by three graduate assistants and one part-time earnings assistant.

With the loss of a separate freshman program, the Cornhuskers began taking fewer walk-ons. They had nearly 50 recruited walk-ons in 1990, with fewer than half that many in 1992.

Fewer walk-ons contributed to the overall numbers crunch, limiting practice stations as well as team depth and creating more opportunity for recruits to contribute as true freshmen.

Now "we don't really talk to a player (recruit) about redshirting," said Solich. "We talk to them about coming in (and) we'll work with them just as we would everybody in the system."

"We'll do everything that we can to get them on the field as quickly as they

can get on the field. There's going to be a combination of things that have to take place in order to get on the field. But we'll do everything we can to help a player show his best and . . . be a part of it right away."

Some freshmen come to Nebraska expecting to redshirt. "A guy says, 'Hey, Coach, I need a year in the weight room. I need this or I need that.' He's not counting on playing," Solich said. "But it's still a deal where a good share of your athletes want to step on the field as quickly as possible."

"And you want to make sure you give them every opportunity to do that."

Fabian Washington was among the five freshmen who took advantage of opportunities last season, becoming the starting left cornerback. He had to adjust physically as well as learn assignments.

"Me personally, I didn't want to lift weights," he said. "I just wanted to play football. But when you find out that's (lifting) what you've got to do to get better, then you're going to do it."

He found out during two-a-days, after "getting pushed around," he said.

In addition to Dailey, Solich has mentioned David Dyches as a freshman with a chance to contribute right away. Dyches is a place-kicker, and the place-kicking was inconsistent during

the spring.

But opportunity won't be limited to those two positions. "We're going to be very open to freshmen breaking into lineups, to be part of the season next year," said Solich.

Some have suggested returning to the pre-1972 system of freshmen not being eligible for varsity competition, to allow them time to make the transition from high school. Such a transition period isn't necessary, according to Solich. "I think freshmen being eligible, I'm fine with that," he said.

"There are those guys that are physically and mentally mature enough, and ready to go."

In addition to adjusting to the competition, freshmen athletes have to adjust in the classroom.

"I think the statistics would show those guys that get directly involved and don't redshirt do every bit as well, maybe even a little better, in terms of getting off to a good start in school," Solich said.

"I don't think that football itself necessarily holds a guy back academically. It really comes down to how well an individual can adjust to it all. If you adjust well, you'll do it all well. If you don't, then it's probably good to redshirt. That system is in place to really help both kinds of guys out."

Kyle Vanden Bosch, one of the six

who played as true freshmen in 1997, was a two-time Academic All-American and the Vincent dePaul Draddy Award scholarship winner.

Other Academic All-Americans in recent seasons who played as true freshmen included Mike Brown, Chad Kelsay and Grant Wistrom, who also earned that recognition twice.

Besides need, the position often affects whether a freshman can play without redshirting. Since the reinstatement of freshman eligibility in 1972, for example, the late Jake Young, Will Shields and Toniui Fonoti are the only Cornhusker offensive linemen who have played as true freshmen.

John Garrison played, but only as a deep snapper.

Phillips learned how difficult the transition for an offensive lineman from high school to college is, going against Chris Kelsay every day on the scout team in practice.

"That helped me a lot," Phillips said. "It taught me a lot. For the most part at the beginning of the year, I was getting my (butt) kicked. As we went on, further and further, I got better and better. I actually got him one time, good, at the end of the year. So I got a lot out of it, all in all."

Quarterback is also difficult to learn. Gill has maintained contact with Dailey, who will work out in Lincoln over the summer in preparation for two-a-days. But coaches can't supervise, or require, such workouts. Before he arrives, "you can talk to him about certain things," said Gill.

"We can give him some things, playbooks, have him read over those things. But he's got a challenge. I'm not going to say he can't do it. But it's not something that's going to come very easy."

During Solich's five seasons, 19 true freshmen have played, five others besides Washington in the secondary, and only two of them saw significant action except on special teams. Keyuo Craver earned a Blackshirt at corner in 1998 and Philip Bland started three games at safety in 2001.

Incoming freshman defensive backs Adrain Turner and Titus Brothers both have indicated they intend to play immediately. "I feel like I have a chance to start off the bat," Turner told the Lincoln, Neb., Journal Star on the day before letters of intent could be signed in early February.

"I see it as everybody has an equal shot," Brothers told the newspaper.

That's how it will work. A majority will redshirt. But "if it holds true as it's held in the past four or five or six years, you're talking about somewhere between four and to five," Solich said.

The goal is to get the best players on the field, regardless of class. ■

Dailey R

New Jersey product brings confidence, athleticism to Lincoln

By Rick Shaw

Joe Dailey knows that earning a starting spot at Nebraska as a true freshman in 2003 won't be easy.

At the same time, the 6-foot-1, 200-pound quarterback from St. Peter's Prep School in Jersey City, N.J., acknowledges that he's up to the challenge.

"Jammal Lord is the quarterback right now," Dailey said. "He's earned the position. The guy can play and he's proven that. I'm coming in to compete. Competition is going to make us all better. Jammal, Curt Dukes, Mike Stuntz, and myself all have some good things to offer. It's all about what is best for the program. The best players will be out there on Saturday."

Dailey was interviewed before Dukes decided to transfer in late May, which will leave the Huskers

with just three scholarship quarterbacks this fall.

Dailey said Nebraska coaches have told him that he'll be given every opportunity to compete for the starting quarterback position when fall camp opens in August. He planned to arrive in Lincoln the second week of June to participate in summer training with the team.

"The coaches pretty much told me that they'd give me a shot," Dailey said. "That's all I ask for. Give me a pair of pads and a pair of cleats, and let me go after it. I'll go out there and give everything I have and see what happens."

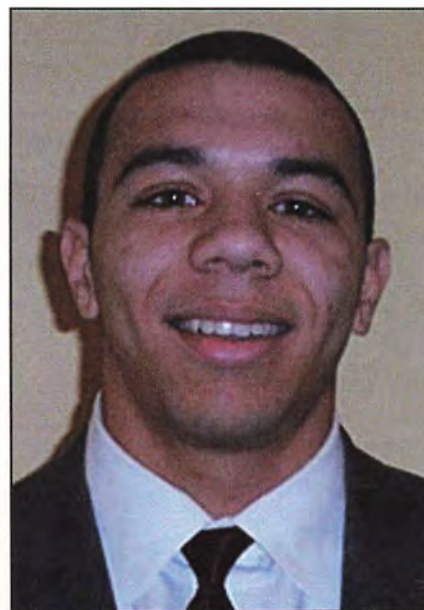
Dailey has confidence in what he brings to the table at the quarterback position. The fleet-footed athlete has the arm strength to go along with a 4.45-second time in the 40-yard dash.

"I like to do it all," Dailey said. "I can run and I can chuck it. I'm not one-dimensional. I'm a well-rounded player. I liken myself to Michael

Nebraska's 2003 Signees

Player	Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Greg Austin	Cypress, Texas (CyFair)	6-2	290	OL
Andy Birkel	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.	6-3	175	SE
Titus Brothers	Converse, Texas (Judson)	5-11	190	DB
Brett Byford	Hartselle, Ala.	6-4	290	OL
Steve Craver	Hurst, Texas (L.D. Bell)	6-2	195	FS
Joe Dailey	Jersey City, N.J. (St. Peter's)	6-1	200	QB
Donald DeFrاند	Dodge City, Kan., CC	6-2	180	CB
Darren DeLone	Mt. San Antonio, Calif., CC	6-5	320	OL
David Dyches	Spring, Texas (Westfield)	6-1	185	PK
Tierre Green	Omaha, Neb. (Benson)	6-1	195	ATH
Corey McKeon	Naperville, Ill. (North)	6-2	215	LB
Josh Mueller	Columbus, Neb. (Lakeview)	6-6	250	TE
Wali Muhammad	Coffeyville, Kan., CC	6-2	245	RE
Chris Patrick	Ithaca, Mich.	6-6	245	RE
J.B. Phillips	Colleyville, Texas (Heritage)	6-3	250	TE
Bo Ruud	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.	6-3	210	LB
Ryan Schuler	Sioux Falls, S.D. (Washington)	6-7	270	OT
Brandon Teamer	Omaha, Neb. (Central)	6-5	265	DT
Adrain Turner	Terrell, Texas	5-10	185	DB

Ready to Go



Quarterback recruit Joe Dailey (above and left) passed for 1,378 yards and 19 touchdowns as a senior at St. Peter's Prep in Jersey City, N.J.

said. "I believe that the Nebraska program is going to be back where it belongs very soon. I'm just another piece of that resurgence. I see it happening.

"Nebraska football is all about being the greatest and I envision myself being part of that."

It's the dedication to excellence and rich tradition that attracted Dailey to Nebraska after he originally committed to Syracuse in the summer of 2002.

"I originally chose Syracuse," Dailey said. "I decided to take a trip to Nebraska in the fall though. It (NU) was everything that a football player could ever want.

"I mean no disrespect, but Nebraska is so much bigger than Syracuse football. It's the big time, where you get to perform under the spotlight.

"Football is my life and I knew on my visit to Lincoln that Nebraska was my Mecca . . . my heaven." ■

Vick . . . as kind of the quarterback of the future."

Dailey set the school record at St. Peter's for career passing yards. As a senior, he passed for more than 1,400 yards and rushed for another 800.

He turned down scholarship offers from Syracuse, Virginia Tech,

Rutgers, Maryland and a host of other schools in favor of the Huskers.

Dailey hopes his talents will help return the Nebraska football program to the national stage after a disappointing 2002 campaign that saw the Cornhuskers finish 7-7.

"I tell you what I believe," Dailey

The B



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Championship Game Results

- 2002 — Oklahoma 29, Colorado 7
- 2001 — Colorado 39, Texas 37
- 2000 — Oklahoma 27, Kansas St. 24
- 1999 — Nebraska 22, Texas 6
- 1998 — Texas A&M 36, Kansas St. 33
- 1997 — Nebraska 54, Texas A&M 15
- 1996 — Texas 37, Nebraska 27



Oklahoma and Texas can rely on strong defenses to help carry them. The Sooner defense has nine returning starters, including two-time All-Big 12 selection Tommie Harris (above). Cornerback Nathan Vasher (right) leads a Longhorn secondary that yielded the fewest passing yards in the conference.

October Tests Will Be Crucial

*Two games could determine
Big 12's championship chances*



By Mike Babcock

The Big 12 could have three national championship contenders, until early October anyway. That's when one of the three, and possibly two, could see its Sugar Bowl hopes diminish.

On Oct. 4, Kansas State plays Texas at Austin, and a week later, the Longhorns play Oklahoma in Dallas. Those two games could have a significant impact on whether the conference will be represented in the Bowl Championship Series national title game in New Orleans on Jan. 4 — and by whom.

Regardless of what happens, of course, the Big 12 Championship Game will be a factor, too. But those

two games will probably provide a preview of who will meet in Kansas City on Dec. 6.

In the North Division, "it's going to be us, Nebraska, Kansas State and I think you have to throw Missouri in there," Colorado Coach Gary Barnett said before the start of spring practice.

Barnett's team has represented the North in the conference playoff the past two seasons and will be looking to make an unprecedented third consecutive appearance.

Kansas State is the better choice in the North, however.

In the South, "they're going to be five deep," Barnett said.

Maybe so, but Oklahoma and

Texas are the class of the division, if not the conference.

The Sooners have been in the national championship race the past three seasons, winning it in 2000 but faltering in 2001 and 2002. Despite beating Texas in each of those seasons, they were upset by Oklahoma State in both, as well as by Nebraska in 2001 and Texas A&M in 2002.

Quarterback play has been a factor in Oklahoma's coming up short, and it will be a question again going into the season. Jason White needs to be healthy if the Sooners are to have experience at the position, and even he has started only four games during his career because of injuries.

Oklahoma also has to find a replacement for Quentin Griffin, whose size belied his offensive production: 1,884 rushing yards, 35 pass



Kansas State running back Darren Sproles is the Big 12's top returning rusher. He averaged 112.7 yards per game and scored 17 touchdowns.



The Big 12 has two new head coaches in Dennis Franchione (left), who moved from Alabama to Texas A&M, and Guy Morriss, who left Kentucky to take over at Baylor.

receptions and 18 touchdowns.

There wasn't a more versatile back in the country, much less the Big 12.

The good news on offense is, the Sooners have the foundation of a line described by Coach Bob Stoops as potentially the best in his tenure in Jammal Brown, Vince Carter and Wes Sims.

Stoops has said the Sooners should be more balanced on offense.

They can compensate for whatever offensive limitations they might have, anyway, with a defense that includes nine returning starters, among them Teddy Lehman and Tommie Harris.

Though Texas probably can't match the Sooners man-for-man on defense, it has its share of stellar performers, including Marcus Tubbs, Derrick Johnson and Nathan Vasher. Johnson, who was credited with 119 tackles as a sophomore, could be good enough to leave early for the NFL.

That senior Roy Williams didn't leave early means the Longhorns will have a more explosive offense than Oklahoma's. Williams caught 64 passes for 1,142 yards and 12 touchdowns, numbers that would have led just about any conference except one with Oklahoma State's Rashaun Woods.

And Williams isn't the Longhorns' only receiving threat. B.J. Johnson can't be ignored.

The question is, who will throw to them? And the answer, for now, is Chance Mock, a junior who earned the starting job in the spring from redshirted freshman Victor Young.

Mock also will have Cedric Benson at his disposal. The talented junior tailback, another candidate to take an early-out to the NFL, rushed for 1,293 yards and 12 touchdowns last season.

Kansas State can match the Longhorns' offensive diversity, with the added dimension of a veteran quarterback, and one being mentioned as a Heisman Trophy candidate, in Eli Roberson.

Even though Roberson has no proven back-up, "I think he's equally as motivated as he was a year ago," said Coach Bill Snyder. Roberson rushed and passed for more than 1,000 yards in 2002. And he was complemented by tailback Darren Sproles, who rushed for 1,465 yards

and 17 touchdowns.

The Wildcats' remarkable success under Snyder has been achieved with solid defense, however, and this season should be no exception, despite the departures of Terrence Newman and Terry Pierce.

End Andrew Shull, linebacker Josh Buhl and safety Rashad Washington are among those returning from a unit that ranked first nationally in scoring defense and second in total defense.

As usual, Kansas State's non-conference schedule is such that it will be difficult to gauge the Wildcats prior to their trip to Texas. After opening against California in the Black Coaches Association Classic at Kansas City, they play Troy State, McNeese State, Massachusetts and Marshall.

Kansas State plays another key interdivisional game the week after Texas, traveling to Stillwater to play Oklahoma State, potentially the best of the rest in the South Division.

The Cowboys have the nation's top receiver in Woods, a 1,000-yard rusher in Tatum Bell and an experienced quarterback in Josh Fields, who threw for 3,145 yards and 31 touchdowns, the majority of them to Woods, who finished with 107 catches, 1,695 yards and 17 touchdowns.

As with Oklahoma State, Missouri's concern is defense. The Tigers might have enough offense to contend for the North Division title. Quarterback Brad Smith rushed for 1,029 yards and completed 196-of-366 passes for 2,333 yards and 15 touchdowns, with only six interceptions.

But Missouri will have to outscore its opponents to finish in the upper half of the North, with stiff competition from Nebraska and Colorado. The Cornhuskers visit Columbia on Oct. 11, for a game that could go a long way in determining the North runner-up — or winner if Kansas State falters.

Nebraska, which doesn't figure to draw much preseason attention and probably won't be included in the Top 25 nationally, could be a surprise, assuming Jammal Lord stays healthy.

Colorado has the defense to repeat as divisional winner but not the offense. For one, Chris Brown, who rushed for 1,841 yards and 19 touchdowns, is gone. And for another, the Buffaloes don't have a proven quar-

terback, to quote Barnett, "I don't know if we've got an All-Big 12 player there."

What the Buffaloes do have is a killer non-conference schedule, which could set the tone for what follows. Plus, they have to play Oklahoma as well as at Kansas State.

Iowa State's late-season slide in 2002 could have been an indication of how things will be in 2003, while Kansas will be hard-pressed to escape the North Division cellar.

Baylor has a new coach in Guy Morriss but faces the same problem in the South Division.

The departure of Kliff Kingsbury probably leaves Texas Tech in the South's second division, and the

enthusiasm that has attended Dennis Franchione's controversial arrival at Texas A&M could be offset by the reality of competing in a conference with three national title contenders on top.

The Aggies are like Nebraska, somewhat of an unknown quantity. That will make for an interesting matchup in Lincoln, not to mention the fact that Athletic Director Bill Byrne left the Cornhuskers for College Station in the wake of last season's 7-7 record.

The Nebraska-Texas A&M game is scheduled for Oct. 18, coming on the heels of the critical two-week span that could very well have national championship implications. ■

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2002 Season

FINAL STANDINGS

	CONFERENCE					OVERALL				
	W	L	PCT.	PF	PA	W	L	PCT.	PF	PA
North Division										
Colorado	7	1	.875	281	175	9	5	.643	398	325
Kansas State	6	2	.750	342	91	11	2	.846	582	154
Iowa State	4	4	.500	201	238	7	7	.500	404	396
Nebraska	3	5	.375	192	215	7	7	.500	383	335
Missouri	2	6	.250	214	268	5	7	.417	360	352
Kansas	0	8	.000	125	380	2	10	.167	248	507
South Division										
Oklahoma	6	2	.750	305	154	12	2	.857	541	216
Texas	6	2	.750	235	160	11	2	.846	439	212
Texas Tech	5	3	.625	298	286	9	5	.643	537	439
Oklahoma State	5	3	.625	256	230	8	5	.615	446	356
Texas A&M	3	5	.375	266	245	6	6	.500	345	280
Baylor	1	7	.125	93	366	3	9	.250	202	496

POSTSEASON ACTION

Big 12 Championship Game
Oklahoma 29, Colorado 7

Tangerine Bowl
Texas Tech 55, Clemson 15

Houston Bowl
Oklahoma St. 33, So. Mississippi 23

Independence Bowl
Mississippi 27, Nebraska 23

Holiday Bowl
Kansas State 34, Arizona State 27

Alamo Bowl
Wisconsin 31, Colorado 28, ot

Humanitarian Bowl
Boise State 34, Iowa State 16

Cotton Bowl
Texas 35, LSU 20

Rose Bowl
Oklahoma 34, Washington State 14

TEAM STATISTICS

RUSHING OFFENSE

	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. Nebraska	14	724	3762	5.2	29	268.7
2. Kansas State	13	655	3438	5.2	53	264.5
3. Colorado	14	652	3259	5.0	28	232.8
4. Oklahoma	14	591	2668	4.5	33	190.6
5. Missouri	12	494	2204	4.5	27	183.7
6. Oklahoma St.	13	441	1930	4.4	24	148.5
7. Iowa State	14	554	2030	3.7	30	145.0
8. Texas	13	511	1762	3.4	23	135.5
9. Kansas	12	472	1515	3.2	18	126.2
10. Texas A&M	12	421	1418	3.4	16	118.2
11. Baylor	12	447	1241	2.8	16	103.4
12. Texas Tech	14	385	1391	3.6	15	99.4

RUSHING DEFENSE

	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. Kansas State	13	446	904	2.0	7	69.5
2. Oklahoma	14	496	1510	3.0	9	107.9
3. Texas A&M	12	468	1571	3.4	14	130.9
4. Texas	13	474	1853	3.9	10	142.5
5. Nebraska	14	549	2053	3.7	25	146.6
6. Oklahoma St.	13	539	1912	3.5	25	147.1
7. Baylor	12	440	1963	4.5	31	163.6
8. Texas Tech	14	548	2295	4.2	29	163.9
9. Missouri	12	511	2013	3.9	22	167.8
10. Colorado	14	558	2381	4.3	25	170.1
11. Iowa State	14	584	2444	4.2	30	174.6
12. Kansas	12	533	3075	5.8	34	256.2

PASSING OFFENSE

	G	AT	CP	IN	PCT	YDS	YPA	TD	YPG
1. TT	14	770	515	15	66.9	5444	7.1	50	388.9
2. A&M	12	425	219	19	51.5	3216	7.6	25	268.0
3. OSU	13	454	243	15	53.5	3414	7.5	32	262.6
4. UT	13	404	249	12	59.4	3251	8.0	26	250.1
5. ISU	14	454	250	18	55.1	3308	7.3	16	236.3
6. BAY	12	400	224	22	56.0	2778	6.9	10	231.5
7. MU	12	380	204	7	53.7	2438	6.4	17	203.2
8. OU	14	419	242	11	57.8	2828	6.7	28	202.0
9. KU	12	430	200	13	46.5	2286	5.3	13	190.5
10. KSU	13	223	120	6	53.8	2066	9.3	14	158.9
11. CU	14	316	163	12	51.6	1984	6.3	16	141.7
12. NU	14	235	105	12	44.7	1462	6.2	12	104.4

PASSING DEFENSE

	G	AT	CP	IN	PCT	YDS	YPA	TD	YPG
1. UT	13	400	192	22	48.0	2147	5.4	17	165.2
2. KSU	13	418	191	20	45.7	2333	5.6	11	179.5
3. ISU	14	426	242	10	56.8	2580	6.1	16	184.3
4. OU	14	432	206	24	47.7	2594	6.0	13	185.3
5. CU	14	453	254	15	56.1	2739	6.0	16	195.6
6. A&M	12	401	229	16	57.1	2490	6.2	17	207.5
7. NU	14	459	231	13	50.3	3014	6.6	12	215.3
8. KU	12	302	167	12	55.3	2594	8.6	27	216.2
9. TT	14	472	263	16	55.7	3354	7.1	26	239.6
10. BAY	12	382	235	8	61.5	2900	7.6	30	241.7
11. OSU	13	480	263	12	54.8	3271	6.8	20	251.6
12. MU	12	426	253	12	59.4	3391	8.0	19	282.6

TOTAL OFFENSE

	G	PLYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. Texas Tech	14	1155	6835	5.9	65	488.2
2. Kansas State	13	878	5504	6.3	67	423.4
3. Oklahoma St.	13	895	5344	6.0	56	411.1
4. Oklahoma	14	1010	5496	5.4	61	392.6
5. Missouri	12	874	4642	5.3	44	386.8
6. Texas A&M	12	846	4634	5.5	41	386.2
7. Texas	13	915	5013	5.5	49	385.6
8. Iowa State	14	1008	5338	5.3	46	381.3
9. Colorado	14	968	5243	5.4	44	374.5
10. Nebraska	14	959	5224	5.4	41	373.1
11. Baylor	12	847	4019	4.7	26	334.9
12. Kansas	12	902	3801	4.2	31	316.8

TOTAL DEFENSE

	G	PLYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. Kansas State	13	864	3237	3.7	18	249.0
2. Oklahoma	14	928	4104	4.4	22	293.1
3. Texas	13	874	4000	4.6	27	307.7
4. Texas A&M	12	869	4061	4.7	31	338.4
5. Iowa State	14	1010	5024	5.0	46	358.9
6. Nebraska	14	1008	5067	5.0	37	361.9
7. Colorado	14	1011	5120	5.1	41	365.7
8. Oklahoma St.	13	1019	5183	5.1	45	398.7
9. Texas Tech	14	1020	5649	5.5	55	403.5
10. Baylor	12	822	4863	5.9	61	405.2
11. Missouri	12	937	5404	5.8	41	450.3
12. Kansas	12	835	5669	5.8	61	472.4

SCORING OFFENSE

	G	PTS	AVG	TD	PAT				FG	SAF
					XP	2XP	DXP			
1. KSU	13	581	44.7	79	65	3	1	11	1	
2. OU	14	541	38.6	70	61	3	0	16	3	
3. TT	14	537	38.4	71	62	5	0	13	0	
4. OSU	13	445	34.2	59	55	1	1	11	0	
5. UT	13	439	33.8	56	55	0	0	16	0	
6. MU	12	360	30.0	48	43	0	0	9	1	
7. ISU	14	404	28.9	50	46	1	0	18	1	
8. A&M	12	345	28.8	45	39	0	0	12	0	
9. CU	14	398	28.4	52	45	4	0	11	0	
10. NU	14	383	27.4	48	47	0	0	16	0	
11. KU	12	248	20.7	33	23	2	0	7	1	
12. BAY	12	202	16.8	26	17	4	0	7	0	

SCORING DEFENSE

	G	PTS	AVG	TD	XP	2XP	DXP	FG	SAF
1. KSU	13	153	11.8	19	17	0	1	7	0
2. OU	14	216	15.4	27	23	2	0	9	0
3. UT	13	212	16.3	27	20	3	0	8	0
4. CU	14	325	23.2	43	35	0	0	10	1
5. A&M	12	280	23.3	34	27	2	0	15	0
6. NU	14	335	23.9	41	38	0	0	17	0
7. OSU	13	356	27.4	47	33	3	0	11	1
8. ISU	14	396	28.3	52	48	0	0	12	0
9. MU	12	352	29.3	44	35	4	0	15	0
10. TT	14	439	31.4	59	51	2	0	8	3
11. BAY	12	496	41.3	67	58	0	0	12	0
12. KU	12	507	42.2	67	57	4	0	12	2

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

Player, School, Class	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YPG
1. Chris Brown, CU, Jr.	12	303	1841	6.1	19	153.4
2. Quentin Griffin, OU, Sr.	14	287	1884	6.6	15	134.6
3. Darren Sproles, KSU, So.	13	237	1465	6.2	17	112.7
4. Jammal Lord, NU, Jr.	14	251	1512	5.6	8	100.9
5. Tatum Bell, OSU, Jr.	11	175	1096	6.3	11	99.6
6. Cedric Benson, UT, So.	13	305	1293	4.2	12	99.5
7. Eli Roberson, KSU, Jr.	12	202	1032	5.1	16	86.0
8. Brad Smith, MU, Fr.	12	193	1029	5.3	7	85.8
9. Derek Farmer, A&M, So.	10	172	739	4.3	7	73.9
10. Zack Abbron, MU, Jr.	11	176	758	4.3	15	68.9

PASSING EFFICIENCY

(Min. Five Attempts Per Game)						RATING		
Player, School, Class	G	AT	CP	PCT	I	YDS	TD	PTS
1. Kliff Kingsbury, TT, Sr.	14	712	479	67.3	13	5017	45	143.7
2. Chris Simms, UT, Sr.	13	396	235	59.3	12	3207	26	143.0
3. Josh Fields, OSU, So.	13	408	226	55.4	10	3145	31	140.3
4. El Roberson, KSU, Jr.	12	175	91	52.0	4	1580	7	136.5
5. Nate Hybl, OU, Sr.	14	363	209	57.6	8	2538	24	133.7
6. Dustin Long, A&M, So.	12	333	177	53.2	16	2509	19	125.7
7. Seneca Wallace, OISU, Sr.	14	443	244	55.1	18	3245	15	119.7
8. Brad Smith, MU, Fr.	12	366	196	53.6	6	2333	15	117.3
9. Aaron Karas, BAY, So.	11	251	150	59.8	13	1792	6	117.3
10. Robert Hodge, CU, Sr.	13	258	137	53.1	9	1609	13	115.1

RECEPTIONS PER GAME

Player, School, Class	G	REC	YDS	TD	RPG	YPC
1. Rashaun Woods, OSU, Jr.	13	107	1695	17	8.2	15.8
2. Taurean Henderson, TT, Fr.	14	98	633	6	7.0	6.5
3. Justin Gage, MU, Sr.	12	82	1075	9	6.8	13.1
4. Reggie Newhouse, BAY, Sr.	12	75	1140	3	6.2	15.2
5. Wes Welker, TT, Jr.	14	86	1054	7	6.1	12.3
6. Roy Williams, UT, Jr.	12	64	1142	12	5.3	17.8
7. Mickey Peters, TT, Jr.	13	64	749	8	4.9	11.7
8. Lane Danielson, ISU, Jr.	13	63	1073	3	4.8	17.0
9. Jamar Taylor, A&M, Jr.	10	44	760	3	4.4	17.3
10. Robert Quiroga, BAY, Jr.	12	49	556	1	4.1	11.3

TOTAL OFFENSE

Player, School, Class	G	PLAYS	RUSH	PASS	TOTAL	YPG
1. Kliff Kingsbury, TT, Sr.	13	814	-114	5017	4903	350.2
2. Brad Smith, MU, Fr.	14	559	1029	2333	3362	280.2
3. Seneca Wallace, ISU, Sr.	12	566	437	3245	3682	253.0
4. Bill Whittemore, KU, Jr.	12	442	549	1666	2215	246.1
5. Chris Simms, UT, Sr.	14	466	-124	3207	3083	237.2
6. Josh Fields, OSU, So.	12	458	-72	3145	3073	236.4
7. Eli Roberson, KSU, Jr.	13	377	1032	1580	2612	217.7
8. Dustin Long, A&M, So.	13	382	13	2509	2522	210.2
9. Jammal Lord, NU, Jr.	10	455	1412	1362	2774	198.1
10. Nate Hybl, OU, Sr.	12	426	-54	2538	2484	177.4

SCORING

Player, School, Class	G	TD	XP	FG	PTS	PTPG
1. Chris Brown, CU, Jr.	12	19	0	0	114	9.5
2. Zack Abbron, MU, Jr.	11	17	0	0	102	9.3
3. Eli Roberson, KSU, Jr.	12	16	1	0	98	8.2
4. Darren Sproles, KSU, So.	13	17	1	0	104	8.0
5. Dusty Mangum, UT, So.	13	0	54	16	102	7.8
6. Rashaun Woods, OSU, Jr.	13	17	0	0	102	7.8
7. Quentin Griffin, OU, Sr.	14	18	0	0	108	7.7
8. Trey DiCarlo, OU, Fr.	14	0	58	16	106	7.6
9. Bill Whittemore, KU, Jr.	9	11	0	0	66	7.3
9. Joe Rheem, KS, So.	11	0	53	9	80	7.3

PUNTING

Player, School, Class	G	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG
1. Mark Mariscal, CU, Sr.	14	67	3186	47.6	68
2. Cody Scates, A&M, Jr.	12	67	2931	43.7	67
3. Kyle Larson, NU, Jr.	14	73	3156	43.2	71
4. Brock Harvey, NU, So.	10	54	2295	42.5	69
5. Tony Yelk, ISU, So.	14	45	1907	42.4	64
6. Curtis Ansel, KU, Sr.	12	82	3459	42.2	83
7. Cole Farden, OS, So.	13	57	2358	41.4	62
8. Travis Brown, KSU, Sr.	13	49	2010	41.0	66
9. Bryan Bradford, UT, Sr.	13	67	2685	40.1	71
10. C. Greathouse, BAY, Sr.	14	47	1867	39.7	67

TACKLES

Player, School, Class	G	UT	AT	TT	SACKS
1. Lawrence Flugence, TT, Sr.	14	69	124	193	3.0
2. Ryan Aycock, TT, Jr.	14	64	87	151	2.0
3. James Kinney, MU, So.	12	60	88	148	5.5
4. Brandon Brown, IS, So.	14	45	91	136	6.0
5. Josh Buhl, KSU, Jr.	13	58	77	135	1.0
6. Matt Word, ISU, Sr.	14	55	79	134	2.0
7. Lance Mitchell, OU, Jr.	14	37	87	124	3.0
8. Medford Moorer, CU, Jr.	14	39	81	120	1.0
9. Derrick Johnson, UT, So.	13	45	74	119	2.0
10. Reed Boyd, UT, Jr.	13	59	58	117	2.0
10. Don Strickland, CU, Sr.	14	26	91	117	1.0

INTERCEPTIONS

Player, School, Class	G	NO	YDS	TD	IPG
1. Bobby Walker, KSU, Sr.	11	6	177	3	.55
2. Remuis Johnson, KU, Jr.	12	6	7	0	.50
3. Derrick Strait, OU, Jr.	14	6	175	1	.43
3. Brandon Everage, OU, Jr.	14	6	107	0	.43
5. Jaxson Appel, A&M, Fr.	10	4	46	1	.40
6. Dakarai Pearson, UT, Jr.	13	5	53	0	.38
7. Terence Newman, KSU, Sr.	13	5	21	0	.38
8. R.J. Jones, MU, Sr.	11	4	39	0	.36
9. Nathan Vasher, UT, Jr.	11	4	3	0	.36
10. Byron Jones, A&M, So.	12	4	117	1	.33
10. Derrick Johnson, UT, So.	13	4	85	0	.31
10. Fabian Washington, NU, Fr.	13	4	35	1	.31

2002 FIRST-TEAM ALL-BIG 12 FOOTBALL

(Selections were unanimous Big 12 Coaches and Associated Press unless noted /2003 returners in bold/2002 classification shown)

OFFENSE

WR	Rashaun Woods, Jr., Oklahoma St.
WR	Roy Williams, Jr., Texas C
WR	Justin Gage, Sr., Missouri, AP
TE	Trent Smith, Sr., Oklahoma
OL	Nick Leckey, Jr., Kansas State
OL	Derrick Dockery, Sr., Texas
OL	Wayne Lucier, Sr., Colorado
OL	Justin Bates, Sr., Colorado
OL	Rob Droege, Jr., Missouri, C
OL	Jammal Brown, So., Oklahoma, AP
QB	Kliff Kingsbury, Sr., Texas Tech
RB	Chris Brown, Jr., Colorado
RB	Quentin Griffin, Sr., Oklahoma
PK	Josh Brown, Sr., Nebraska, C
PK	Adam Benike, Jr., Iowa State, AP
KR	Terence Newman, Sr., Kansas State, C
AP	Wes Welker, Jr., Texas Tech, AP

DEFENSE

DE	Jimmy Wilkerson, Jr., Oklahoma, C
DE	Cory Redding, Sr., Texas
DL	Tommie Harris, So., Oklahoma
DL	Tank Reese, Sr., Kansas State
DL	Kevin Williams, Sr., Oklahoma State
LB	Teddy Lehman, Jr., Oklahoma
LB	Derrick Johnson, So., Texas
LB	Terry Pierce, Jr., Kansas State, AP
LB	Lawrence Flugence, Sr., T. Tech, AP
DB	Terence Newman, Sr., Kansas State
DB	Brandon Everage, Jr., Oklahoma
DB	Derrick Strait, Jr., Oklahoma
DB	Rod Babers, Sr., Texas
P	Mark Mariscal, Sr., Colorado
PR	DeJuan Groce, Sr., Nebraska, C

SPECIALTY HONORS

Coach of the Year, Coaches
Bill Snyder, Kansas State
Coach of the Year, AP
Les Miles, Oklahoma State
Offensive Player of the Year, Coaches
Chris Brown, Colorado
Offensive Player of the Year, AP
Kliff Kingsbury, Texas Tech
Defensive Player of the Year
Terence Newman, Kansas State
Offensive Newcomer of the Year, Coaches
Bill Whittemore, Kansas
Defensive Newcomer
Lance Mitchell, Oklahoma
Offensive Freshman
Brad Smith, Missouri
Defensive Freshman
Rodrigue Wright, Texas

NORTH



Colorado



Iowa State



Kansas



Kansas State



Missouri



Nebraska

Aug. 23				California*		
Aug. 30	Colo. St. (Denver)	No. Iowa	Northwestern	Troy State	Illinois (St. Louis)	Oklahoma St.
Sept. 6	UCLA	Ohio	UNLV	McNeese St.	@Ball State	Utah State
Sept. 13	Washington St.	Iowa	@Wyoming	Massachusetts	Eastern Illinois	Penn State
Sept. 20	@Florida State		Jacksonville St.	Marshall	Middle Tennessee	
Sept. 27		@No. Illinois	Missouri		@Kansas	@So. Mississippi***
Oct. 4	@Baylor	Oklahoma		@Texas		Troy State
Oct. 11	Kansas	@Texas Tech	@Colorado	@Oklahoma St.	Nebraska	@Missouri
Oct. 18	@Kansas St.	Texas	Baylor	Colorado	@Oklahoma	Texas A&M
Oct. 25	Oklahoma	@Nebraska	@Kansas State	Kansas	Texas Tech	Iowa State
Nov. 1	@Texas Tech	@Missouri	@Texas A&M	Baylor	Iowa State	@Texas
Nov. 8	Missouri	Kansas State	Nebraska	@Iowa State	@Colorado	@Kansas
Nov. 15	@Iowa State	Colorado	@Oklahoma St.	@Nebraska	Texas A&M	Kansas State
Nov. 22		@Kansas	Iowa State	Missouri	@Kansas State	
Nov. 29	Nebraska****					@Colorado****

2003 BIG 12 SCHEDULES

SOUTH



Baylor



Oklahoma



Oklahoma St.



Texas



Texas A&M



Texas Tech

Aug. 23						
Aug. 30	UAB	North Texas	@Nebraska	New Mexico St.	Arkansas St.	SMU
Sept. 6	@North Texas	@Alabama	Wyoming		Utah	New Mexico
Sept. 13	SMU	Fresno State	SW Missouri St.	Arkansas		
Sept. 20	Sam Houston St.	UCLA	@SMU	@Rice	@Virginia Tech**	@N. Carolina St.
Sept. 27				Tulane	Pittsburgh	@Mississippi
Oct. 4	Colorado	@Iowa State	La. Lafayette	Kansas State	@Texas Tech	Texas A&M
Oct. 11	@Texas A&M	Texas (Dallas)	Kansas State	Oklahoma (Dallas)	Baylor	Iowa State
Oct. 18	@Kansas	Missouri	Texas Tech	@Iowa State	@Nebraska	@Oklahoma St.
Oct. 25	Texas	@Colorado	@Texas A&M	@Baylor	Oklahoma St.	@Missouri
Nov. 1	@Kansas State	Oklahoma St.	@Oklahoma	Nebraska	Kansas	Colorado
Nov. 8	Texas Tech	Texas A&M	Texas	@Oklahoma St.	@Oklahoma	@Baylor
Nov. 15	@Oklahoma	Baylor	Kansas	Texas Tech	@Missouri	@Texas
Nov. 22	Oklahoma St.	@Texas Tech	@Baylor			Oklahoma
Nov. 29				@Texas A&M****	Texas****	

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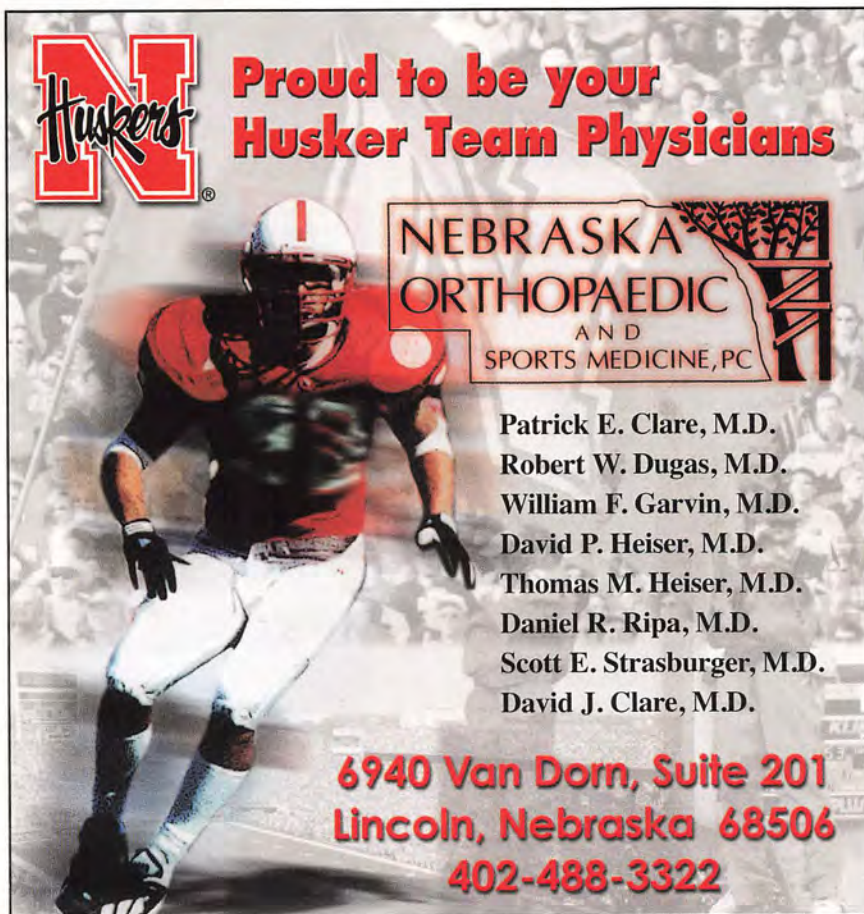


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BIG 12 BREAKDOWN

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OFFENSE

Pos.	Player	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
WR	Rashaun Woods	6-2	190	Sr.	Oklahoma St.
WR	Roy Williams	6-4	210	Sr.	Texas
TE	Thomas Hill	6-5	260	Sr.	Kansas State
OL	Jammal Brown	6-6	310	Jr.	Oklahoma
OL	Rob Droege	6-6	300	Sr.	Missouri
OL	Richie Incognito	6-3	300	So.	Nebraska
OL	Marwan Hage	6-3	295	Sr.	Colorado
OL	Nick Leckey	6-4	285	Sr.	Kansas State
QB	Brad Smith	6-3	201	So.	Missouri
RB	Tatum Bell	5-11	210	Sr.	Oklahoma St.
RB	Darren Sproles	5-7	170	Jr.	Kansas State
PK	Adam Benike	5-10	220	Sr.	Iowa State
KR	Greg Heaggans	6-0	190	So.	Kansas

DEFENSE

DL	Jordan Carstens	6-5	300	Sr.	Iowa State
DL	Tommie Harris	6-3	280	Jr.	Oklahoma
DL	Andrew Shull	6-5	260	Sr.	Kansas State
DL	Marques Harris	6-2	230	Sr.	Colorado
LB	Teddy Lehman	6-2	230	Sr.	Oklahoma
LB	Derrick Johnson	6-4	220	Jr.	Texas
LB	James Kinney	6-1	238	Jr.	Missouri
DB	Derrick Strait	5-11	191	Sr.	Oklahoma
DB	Nathan Vasher	5-11	180	Sr.	Texas
DB	Rashad Washington	6-3	210	Sr.	Kansas State
DB	Medford Moorner	6-2	195	Sr.	Colorado
P	Kyle Larson	6-0	205	Sr.	Nebraska
PR	Wes Welker	5-9	190	Sr.	Texas Tech

QUARTERBACK



Missouri's **BRAD SMITH**

MU	Mr. Smith has settled in
KSU	Heisman watch for Roberson
OU	natural leader in Fields
NU	inexperience behind Lord
KU	Whittemore one-man attack
UT	taking a chance on Mock
OU	White must stay healthy
A&M	McNeal a future star
TTU	Kingsbury is gone
BAY	Karas completed 60 percent
CU	inexperienced trio, or more
ISU	no starter emerged in spring

DEFENSIVE LINE



Oklahoma's **TOMMIE HARRIS**

OU	Harris is healthy now
CU	Bufs' strongest position
UT	veteran front for 'Horns
ISU	Carstens a force up-front
KSU	Shull lone starter back
NU	could be two-deep, at least
MU	Bell on track to stardom
A&M	depth a concern in new 4-3
OSU	spiritual leader needed
TT	no replacement for Hunt
BAY	looks to be Achilles heel
KU	six yards per carry allowed

RUNNING BACK



Kansas State's DARREN SPROLES

KSU	Sproles small but mighty
OSU	'Pokes have a Bell-ringer
UT	Benson has big plans
ISU	plenty of depth here
OU	no replacement for Griffin
NU	looking for a big-play guy
CU	Brown an NFL early-out
MU	Abrons never fumbles
TT	Henderson can catch, too
KU	still "Green" at tailback
A&M	running game has struggled
BAY	one-back set under Morris

LINEBACKER



Oklahoma's TEDDY LEHMAN

OU	Lehman, Mitchell and more
UT	Johnson can do it all
KSU	Pierce will be missed
NU	adjustments under Pelini
CU	Tufts needs to be healthy
ISU	Brown will keep busy
MU	Kinney top returning tackler
OSU	experienced but young
A&M	no proven stars here
TT	Flugence has moved on
KU	Jayhawk backers inexperienced
BAY	Garrett a defensive leader

RECEIVER



Texas' ROY WILLIAMS

UT	Williams decided to stay
TT	five with 50 catches
OSU	Woods the nation's best
ISU	McCarney's best group returns
A&M	outstanding bunch of Aggies
OU	quality but not quantity
MU	passes spread around now
CU	could use five in rotation
KU	five of top seven return
BAY	Quiroga Bears' go-to guy
NU	youth will be served
KSU	top six in 2002 gone

SECONDARY



Texas' NATHAN VASHER

OU	led nation in interceptions
UT	Vasher returns kicks, too
ISU	talented, experienced group
KSU	good, but no Newman now
CU	Moorer makes the calls
NU	newcomer could step in
TT	Aycock only proven veteran
A&M	one senior on two-deep
BAY	Bears "Cash" in at safety
KU	Johnson made six picks
MU	can only get better
OSU	pass defense suffered in 2002

OFFENSIVE LINE



Missouri's A.J. RICKER

OU	best in Stoops' tenure
MU	all starters are back
NU	Incognito returns to tackle
ISU	true freshman could play
KSU	Leckey handles snaps
UT	'Horns have to rebuild
CU	Hage but then who
OSU	three starters return
A&M	depth definitely lacking
TT	only 1,391 rushing yards
KU	jucos transfers will help
BAY	allowed 52 sacks in 2002

KICKING GAME

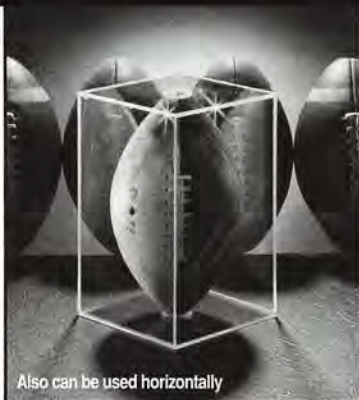


Texas Tech's WES WELKER

OU	Perkins pops some big ones
UT	place-kicker Mangum is back
KSU	Punting needs to improve.
TT	Welker a big-play returner
MU	improved under Pinkel
CU	Bloom's return would help
NU	consistent punter in Larson
KU	Heaggans handles kickoffs
A&M	Scates can boom them
ISU	Benike gets his kicks
OSU	Phillips provides points
BAY	Bears need better returns

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NORTH

- 1 Kansas State** . . . potential national contender
- 2 Nebraska** . . . nothing is guaranteed
- 3 Missouri** . . . Tigers' tank is full
- 4 Colorado** . . . defense should be solid
- 5 Iowa State** . . . Cyclones slide a little
- 6 Kansas** . . . tough to move up

SOUTH

- 1 Oklahoma** . . . sights set on Big Easy
- 2 Texas** . . . still can't beat Sooners
- 3 Oklahoma State** . . . best of division's rest
- 4 Texas A&M** . . . paying price for change
- 5 Texas Tech** . . . alas, no more Kingsbury
- 6 Baylor** . . . new coach, old problems

KANSAS STATE WILDCATS

Ell Roberson? Heisman Trophy candidate? That's the talk.

"There are whispers along those lines at this particular time," Bill Snyder said on the Big 12 coaches' post-spring teleconference. "And I think he's handled it up to this point in time very well."

If the versatile quarterback can continue to do so, Kansas State should be a contender for the Big 12 title and maybe even a contender for a place in the Sugar Bowl national title game.

The Wildcats would seem to have most of the elements to go with him, a 1,400-yard rusher in diminutive tailback Darren Sproles, an outstanding offensive lineman in Nick Leckey and the remnants of a group that led the nation in scoring defense and ranked second in total defense in 2002.

But Roberson's ability to handle the Heisman hype will be crucial.

"It would be my feeling that he will," said Snyder, who dealt with a similar situation in 1998, when quarterback Michael Bishop finished second in the voting to Ricky Williams.

"I think the thing you worry about more than anything else is, it depends on who you're trying to please and who you're trying to perform for," Snyder said. "If you're trying to perform for the writers and the people that vote for such awards, then you're probably going to struggle."

"If you try to perform for your team, I think you'll do just fine."

And, in all likelihood, that's how Roberson will approach it, said Snyder.

Even though ignoring such talk will be difficult, "right now, I'm just trying to help this team get wins the best way that I can," Roberson said following the Wildcats' spring game.

The senior from Baytown, Texas, has endured his share

of ups and downs during his time at Kansas State to emerge as one of the nation's most talented collegiate quarterbacks. He has changed the perception of being a running back taking snaps from center to that of a quarterback who can run.

"I believe that's accurate," Snyder said. "I would make the same assessment."

"I think last year was kind of a breakout year for Ell. He certainly didn't get to the level of his capabilities, but

he got a lot closer, and the thing I was impressed with over the course of last year, from the beginning of the out-of-season program, I think he made constant improvement."

"I thought he continued that improvement throughout the year."

Roberson earned a place on the conference coaches' All-Big 12 third team, completing 91-of-175 passes for 1,580 yards and seven touchdowns and rushing for 1,032 yards and 16 touchdowns. His pass efficiency rating would have ranked 20th nationally had he met the NCAA minimum.

He completed 52 percent of his passes and was intercepted only four times, in marked contrast to a sophomore season in which he completed just 39.7 percent of his passes, with four touchdowns and eight interceptions. Some Wildcat fans were inclined to toss him on the scrap heap.

Roberson had to earn the starting job last season in competition with Marc Dunn. Now, he's established, and Dunn is, well, done. So there's the potential for a loss of focus.

Snyder acknowledges that possibility. "It might be easy, and certainly from my vantage point, to say, 'Be careful because you don't have the same presence of competition behind you,'" he said.

"You don't want him to relax and not continue to strive to be the best that he can be. But I see Ell as motivated a

Kansas State Sports Information



Ell Roberson completed 52 percent of his passes last season and was intercepted just four times.

little differently now than he was a year ago."

The competition for the starting job was "the baseline" for Roberson's motivation last season, Snyder said. "I think today it's kind of a personal thing with Ell."

As a result, "I think he's equally as motivated as he was a year ago."

So are his teammates, according to Leckey, who has settled at center after moving there from guard last season. "We've always got the mentality that we will be at the top," he said.

Tight end Thomas Hill, a candidate for all-conference honors, returns, as does James Terry, the team's second-leading receiver with 28 catches for 561 yards and five touchdowns.

The most significant losses on offense were in a line that cleared the way for the nation's fifth-best rushing attack. The Wildcats led the nation in rushing touchdowns with 51.

The rugged Sproles accounted for 17 of them, and averaged 6.2 yards per carry.

The team's biggest losses were on defense, specifically cornerback Terrence Newman and inside linebacker Terry Pierce. Newman was the fifth player selected in the NFL draft, by the Dallas Cowboys, while Pierce was taken by the Denver Broncos in the second round.

Second-year defensive coordinator Bob Elliott will build around end Andrew Shull, linebackers Josh Buhl and Bryan Hickman, strong safety Rashad Washington and cornerback Randy Jordan.

Shull led the team in tackles for loss, with 17, and sacks, with 10. Buhl was the leading tackler with 135, and Washington was third in tackles with 80, in addition to breaking up 10 passes.

Place-kicker Joe Rheem returns, but punter Travis Brown is gone. And the departure of Newman leaves a void in punt and kickoff returns — he led the conference in the latter.

Even though Kansas State appears to be a clear-cut favorite to represent the North Division in the Big 12 championship game at Kansas City on Dec. 6, Snyder is characteristically cautious.

"I think we made great strides in evaluating personnel during the course of the spring," last season's conference coach of the year said. "But to me, it's kind of a never-ending process."

"Like a lot of things, you can build something up, and something can come along and tear it down very rapidly. That can be your collective performance or individual performance."

How Roberson handles the Heisman attention, for example, will impact the entire team. ■



Kansas State Sports Information

Linebacker Josh Buhl was Kansas State's leading tackler with 135.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

Quarterback **Ell Roberson** and tailback **Darren Sproles** each rushed for more than 1,000 yards last season, the first time in school history that has happened. Despite key losses, the defense figures to be solid again. That's been the pattern the last four seasons, with no lower than a No. 4 national ranking.

QUESTION MARKS

Replacing **Terrence Newman** will be difficult, not only for what he provided in the secondary but also what he provided as a kick returner. And the offensive line must be rebuilt.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Ask Nebraska what kind of a difference Roberson can make. He rushed for 228 yards and three touchdowns in Kansas State's 49-13 victory at Manhattan last season.

Sproles would be the guy just about anywhere else.

EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES

KSU led the nation in defense-special teams touchdowns in 2002, with 12. Eight teams were tied for second with nine. Included in the Wildcats' total were four on blocked kicks.

STAFF ADJUSTMENT

Coach Bill Snyder lost two assistants to Kentucky, offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach **Ron Hudson** and running game coordinator and offensive line coach **Paul Dunn**. **Del Miller**, who had been the defensive ends coach, and receivers coach **Greg Peterson** were named co-offensive coordinators.

Peterson was the passing game coordinator. **Bob Stanley** was hired from SMU to coach the offensive line, and **Joe Bob Clements** was promoted from graduate assistant to defensive ends coach.

1st
NORTH DIVISION

2002 RECORD: 11-2 CONFERENCE FINISH: 6-2

A 31	Western Kentucky	W, 48-3
S 7	UL Monroe	W, 68-0
S 14	Eastern Illinois	W, 63-13
S 21	USC	W, 27-20
O 5	@ Colorado	L, 35-31
O 12	Oklahoma State	W, 44-9
O 19	Texas	L, 17-14
O 26	@ Baylor	W, 44-10
N 2	@ Kansas	W, 64-0
N 9	Iowa State	W, 58-7
N 16	Nebraska	W, 49-13
N 23	@ Missouri	W, 38-0
D 27	Arizona State&	W, 34-27

&Holiday Bowl, San Diego, Calif.

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	James Terry	6-5	180	Sr.	LE	Andrew Shull	6-5	260	Sr.
	Davin Dennis	6-1	175	So.		Scott Edmonde	6-4	255	Sn.
LT	Jerome Clary	6-7	290	So.	DT	Justin Montgomery	6-2	281	Jr.
	Peni Holakeitua	6-8	310	Jr.		Derek Marso	6-3	279	Sb.
LG	Ryan Lilja	6-3	300	Sr.	NT	Andrew Bulman	6-3	275	Sr.
	J. Keaulana-Kamakea	6-3	270	Sr.	or	Jermaine Berry	6-0	295	Jr.
C	Nick Leckey	6-4	285	Sr.	RE	Alex Carrier	6-4	255	Jr.
	Ryan Schmucker	6-5	295	Jr.		Thomas Houchin	6-3	260	Sr.
RG	Mike Johnson	6-4	280	Jr.	LB	Bryan Hickman	6-3	220	Sr.
	Ben Rattelle	6-7	305	Sr.		Jared Johnson	6-3	220	Jr.
RT	Jon Doty	6-8	270	Jr.	LB	Matt Butler	6-2	225	So.
	Chris Boggess	6-6	315	Jr.		Ted Sims	6-1	230	So.
TE	Thomas Hill	6-5	260	Sr.	LB	Maurice Thurmond	6-2	215	Jr.
	Travon Magee	6-7	265	Sr.		Josh Buhl	6-0	210	Sr.
QB	Ell Roberson	6-1	205	Sr.	CB	Randy Jordan	6-2	175	Sr.
	Jeff Schwinn	6-2	205	Sr.		Cedrick Williams	5-9	165	Jr.
RB	Darren Sproles	5-7	170	Jr.	FS	Jesse Tetuan	6-0	185	So.
	Daniel Davis	6-0	215	Sr.		James McGill	6-3	215	Sr.
FB	Travis Wilson	6-4	240	Sr.	SS	Rashad Washington	6-3	210	Sr.
	Victor Mann	6-2	230	So.		Marcus Patton	6-1	210	Jr.
WR	Derrick Evans	5-11	175	Sr.	CB	Louis Lavender	6-0	185	Jr.
or	Antoine Polite	6-2	180	Jr.	or	David Rose	5-10	180	Jr.
PK	Joe Rheem	6-2	210	Jr.	P	Jared Brite	6-2	185	Sr.

Players with starting experience in bold

MISSOURI TIGERS

Just before taking the job as head coach at Missouri, Gary Pinkel asked his wife a rhetorical question: "You know how much energy it's going to take to do this?"

He had to ask himself "whether I want to put myself through this."

Pinkel had enjoyed success at Toledo, compiling a 73-37-3 record in 10 seasons. Giving that up for a program with two winning seasons in the previous 17, under four coaches, would be difficult.

Two losing seasons later, he understands how difficult. "This has not been a fun two years for me," he said. "I'm used to winning at a high level, being associated with winning at a high level."

"I'm glad the two years are over. I would like to start reaping some of the benefits of those two years of hard work. In this business you've got to go out and prove it. I'm looking forward to that."

Pinkel's anticipation is based not only on an investment of energy but also on the multiple talents of quarterback Brad Smith, the hands-down 2002 Big 12 Offensive Freshman of the Year.

Smith emerged from anonymity to become only the second player in NCAA Division I-A history to rush for 1,000 yards and pass for 2,000 yards in the same season.

The first was Clemson's Woodrow Dantzler.

Smith can't rest on his freshman success, of course.

"Like anything, if Brad sits back and thinks he's got the answers, (that) he's a great player now, he's not going to do the things necessary to improve and help us win," said Pinkel.

"We sat down with him after the season was over and analyzed everything that he had done. When a player has such a good year, you really try to look at every little detail."

One aspect that should be different is his perception of the game.

"Although he had tremendous poise from day one, things have really slowed down for him. I think that's what any great quarterback will tell you, that when you get that experience level, the defense and everything that's going 100 miles an hour starts slowing down," Pinkel said.

Because of that, Smith will have more responsibility, be allowed to make more decisions at the line of scrimmage,

before the ball is snapped.

"We protected him a lot last year, put him in positions where he did not have to check very much," said Pinkel. "We did all those things by design."

Although Smith completed 196-of-366 passes (53.6 percent) for 2,333 yards and 15 touchdowns with only six interceptions, he has worked to be a more accurate passer, according to Pinkel.

"I think he's working very hard on that," Pinkel said.

Smith also has to continue to make good decisions on when to run.

"He's got to pick his moments," said Pinkel. "He's a great athlete. He doesn't take very many big hits because he's one of those guys, he's just very smooth and he's got great quickness."

He has left no doubt about his toughness and durability. But "he's going to have to know when to go down, because if he takes too many hits, it's not good for the team," Pinkel said.

Breaking down the pass protection by running from the pocket also isn't good for the team. That wasn't a problem last season, however, and Pinkel doesn't expect it to be one now.

If it is, he'll let Smith know. "I don't mind him running at all with the ball as long as he's smart, as long as he's not



Brad Smith passed for 2,333 yards and 15 touchdowns as a freshman. He completed 53.6 percent.

breaking down the protection and breaking down the play," said Pinkel.

Smith won't have to do things on his own, of course. Tailback Zack Abron returns, after rushing for 758 yards and 15 touchdowns as a junior, as does the entire offensive line.

Abron fumbled only twice in 176 carries last season, both coming in the opener.

Tackle Rob Droege, guard Tony Palmer and center A.J. Ricker anchor the veteran line, the foundation of what should be, with Smith in charge, among the Big 12's most potent offenses.

The only significant loss from an offense that scored the third-most points in school history is wide receiver Justin Gage, a fifth-round NFL draft pick of the Chicago Bears.



Linebacker James Kinney was involved in 148 tackles last season as a sophomore.

Gage caught 82 passes for 1,075 yards and nine touchdowns. A receiving corps headed by Darius Outlaw, a former quarterback who caught 46 passes last season, will replace him.

Optimism based on the Smith-led offense is tempered by a defense that ranked no higher than ninth in the conference in the major statistical categories last season. The Tigers were 11th in total defense — 107th nationally — and ninth in scoring defense, allowing as many points as they scored.

"We have to make tremendous strides on the defensive side of the ball," Pinkel said. "You do that with personnel. You do that with schemes. You do that with coaching. All of the above. I think we've done a lot of good things, but we have to start playing better defense. And I expect us to."

Tackle Russ Bell, linebacker James Kinney, who was involved in 148 tackles last season, and cornerback Michael Harden are among those on whom Pinkel is counting to accomplish that.

Pinkel's emphasis on creating turnovers paid off last season. The Tigers finished with a plus 12, including 12 pass interceptions and 12 fumble recovers in 12 games.

The kicking game has been a point of emphasis and has improved, after being a source of considerable frustration during Pinkel's first season, when the Tigers finished 4-7.

They were 5-7 last season. "I feel that we've made strides in our program," Pinkel said following spring practice. "We're in a position where we need to go out and earn respect."

They should be able to do that, climb from the North Division's lower half.

"We've developed strength and speed and quickness with the kids in the program," he said of the benefits of two years of hard work. "I think we're more athletic than we've been." ■



At A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

All six players who started in the offensive line return, allowing Coach **Gary Pinkel** to take full advantage of the abilities of sophomore quarterback **Brad Smith**. Punt returner **Marcus James** and kickoff returner **Shirdonya Mitchell**, the team's fastest player, have big-play ability.

QUESTION MARKS

The Tigers must make significant improvement on defense, and against the pass in particular. They ranked 113th nationally in pass defense and 91st in pass efficiency defense. Opponents completed 59.4 percent of their passes and averaged 282.6 yards per game through the air.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Pinkel told the Kansas City Star last season, "Quarterbacks are like tea bags. You don't know what you've got until you put them in hot water." Smith proved he was the genuine article against Oklahoma, producing 391 total yards in a near-upset of the then No. 2-ranked Sooners.

CONTINUING DROUGHT

Missouri has endured 24 consecutive losses against Nebraska, last defeating the Cornhuskers 35-31 at Memorial Stadium in 1978. In addition, the Tigers have suffered 19 consecutive losses against ranked opponents, dating to a 51-50, double-overtime victory at Oklahoma State in 1997.

MORE TO COME

Only two Tigers were selected in the NFL draft, wide receiver **Justin Gage** (Bears, fifth round) and defensive tackle **Keith Wright** (Texans, sixth round). However, "as our program matures, I would like to think that number could increase," Pinkel said.

3rd
NORTH
DIVISION

2002 RECORD: 5-7 CONFERENCE FINISH: 2-6

A 31	Illinois (St. Louis)	W, 33-20
S 7	Ball State	W, 41-6
S 14	@ Bowling Green	L, 51-28
S 28	Troy State	W, 44-7
O 5	Oklahoma	L, 31-24
O 12	@ Nebraska	L, 24-13
O 19	@ Texas Tech	L, 53-28
O 26	Kansas	W, 36-12
N 2	@ Iowa State	L, 42-35
N 9	Colorado	L, 42-35(ot)
N 16	@ Texas A&M	W, 33-27(2 ot)
N 23	Kansas State	L, 38-0

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

XWR	Chris Crosby	6-3 202 So.	DE	Brian Smith	6-4 210 Fr.
	Greg Nutter	5-11 180 Fr.		Zach Vile	6-2 272 Jr.
WT	Rob Droege	6-6 300 Sr.	DT	Phil Pitts	6-1 276 Jr.
	Tony Clinker	6-4 297 Jr.		Russ Bell	6-2 290 Sr.
WG	Tony Palmer	6-3 303 So.	NT	C.J. Mosley	6-3 289 So.
	Joe Gianino	6-3 300 Jr.		Earl Stephens	6-4 276 So.
C	A.J. Ricker	6-4 295 Sr.	DE	Atiyah Ellison	6-4 290 Jr.
	Scott Sells	6-5 292 Sr.		Rusty Groth	6-4 260 Sr.
SG	Cliff Young	6-2 300 Sr.	LB	Henry Sweat	6-0 230 Jr.
	Mike Cook	6-3 317 Fr.		Derrick Ming	5-11 243 So.
ST	Scott Paffrath	6-5 285 Jr.	LB	James Kinney	6-1 238 Jr.
	Steven Sanchez	6-4 30 Sr.		Brandon Barnes	6-3 227 Sr.
TE	J.D. McCoy	6-1 258 Sr.	WH	Jason Simpson	6-1 193 So.
	Clint Matthews	6-2 230 Jr.		Brian Fuller	5-11 190 Jr.
QB	Brad Smith	6-3 201 So.	R	Justin Scott	6-1 196 So.
	Sonny Riccio	6-2 200 So.		Dedrick Harrington	6-4 223 Fr.
TB	Zack Abron	5-10 228 Sr.	FS	Marcus King	5-11 188 Jr.
	Tim Starks	5-1 203 Sr.		Lee Ewigman	5-11 183 So.
HWR	Arnold Britt	6-2 182 So.	CB	A.J. Kincade	5-11 180 So.
	Thomson Omboga	6-2 189 Jr.		Calvin Washington	6-1 192 So.
ZWR	Sean Coffey	6-6 224 So.	CB	Michael Harden	5-11 190 Sr.
	Andrew Hoskins	6-3 202 Fr.		Terrence Curry	5-9 177 Sr.
PK	Mike Matheny	6-2 196 Sr.	P	Brock Harvey	6-1 197 Jr.

Players with starting experience in bold

COLORADO BUFFALOES

To describe Gary Barnett as cautious in his post-spring remarks regarding Colorado's chances of winning an unprecedented third consecutive division title would be to understate.

"At this point in time, we're nowhere near ready to defend the Big 12 North," he said. By fall, however, if the Buffaloes "get some guys back healthy, we should be decent."

Decent, did he say? It will take better than that to win the North.

The basis of Barnett's caution was at least three-fold. For one, he still needs to settle on a quarterback. And for another, he has to rebuild an offensive line with only one returning starter.

If those things can be accomplished during two-a-days, because they weren't during the spring, then Barnett can concern himself with a difficult non-conference schedule that includes games against, in order, archrival Colorado State in Denver, UCLA, Washington State and a trip to Florida State.

Colorado certainly can't be accused of scheduling a winning record.

And a rocky start could have negative implications for the Big 12 season, even though the Buffaloes catch a break before playing at Kansas State and Oklahoma, back-to-back.

But much will happen between now and then, including the selection of a quarterback from among three, and possibly four or five, depending on the aptitude of incoming freshmen Bernard Jackson and Brian White.

"You don't know how freshmen are going to adjust," said Barnett.

So for the time being, the candidates are sophomores Joel Klatt and Erik Greenberg and redshirted freshman James Cox. Between them, they have taken 10 snaps in games.

Greenberg spent the last two years on a Mormon mis-

sion.

Based on their play during the spring, "I don't know if we've got an All-Big 12 player there, but we certainly had guys that threw the ball well and competed," Barnett said. "We probably threw better than we have the last four years."

To put that in context, the Buffaloes ranked 106th nationally in passing offense last season.

Klatt, who was 0-of-3 passing in his first season as a backup to Robert Hodge, spent two years in the San Diego Padres' minor league system before walking on at Colorado last fall.

"He is not overly impressive in any physical way," said Barnett. "He's not tall. He's not heavy. He's not fast. He does get rid of the ball very quickly. He's got a great release. And he's a mature kid."

Cox, who sustained a back injury during winter conditioning, "is a big strong kid that is only going to get bigger and stronger. He's got a really live arm. He's an OK runner."

Cox played safety on defense in high school, but "he hasn't really cut himself loose and seen himself as a scrambler yet," Barnett said. "He's in the pocket, trying to get through all his reads."

That's one of the reasons rebuilding a line around all-conference guard Marwan Hage is critical.

Greenberg "is just sort of a steady performer," said Barnett. "He's an overachiever. Physically he doesn't bring anything to the table that you're impressed with, but he's got a quiet demeanor and he's been an overachiever for a long time and (that) shows the way he's playing now."

Whoever earns the starting job can throw to some talented receivers, including Derek McCoy and John Donahoe, the only other returning starters besides Hage on offense.

McCoy was the leading receiver, with 41 catches for 643

Colorado Sports Information



Tailback Bobby Purify rushed for 739 yards as a backup to Chris Brown last season.

yards and seven touchdowns.

Whether or not Colorado can be as effective running the ball — the Buffaloes ranked third in the conference and ninth nationally — also will depend on the line. Bobby Purify and Brian Calhoun will have to fill a significant void created by Chris Brown's decision to leave early for the NFL.

Calhoun, who rushed for 137 of his 298 yards last season against Nebraska, was more consistent during the spring. But "I imagine we'll rotate them," Barnett said. "That's sort of who we are."

"One, it helps us recruit them. And two, it keeps us fresh in the fourth quarter."

A defense with eight returning starters will probably have to keep the Buffaloes close enough for fresh backs to matter, particularly early in the season while the offense develops.

The key figures on defense are free safety Medford Moorer, end Marques Harris and inside linebacker Sean Tufts, who played in only six games last season because of injury problems.

Moorer was credited with 122 tackles and broke up nine passes, while Harris led the team in tackles for loss, with 14, and was second in quarterback pressures, with 11.

Free safety Medford Moorer had 122 tackles and four interceptions and broke up nine passes during his junior season.

Moorer, Harris and Tufts are seniors, as are other returning starters Phil Jackson, a cornerback, and Gabe Nyenhuis, an end, as well as DeAndre Fluellen, a tackle with starting experience.

Also, the defense will be more comfortable in the 4-2-5 base alignment to which it switched last season. "In the infant stages of us being in that scheme, we were pretty simple," said Barnett.

"I think that defensively, scheme-wise, we'll take a step forward."

John Torp appears set as the punter, but Barnett must settle on a place-kicker, and the status of punt returner Jeremy Bloom is in question. Bloom was second in the Big 12 and fifth in the nation, averaging 16.8 yards per return, but wasn't enrolled in the spring because of ski competition.

Even so, during the spring, "we definitely improved on" the kicking game, Barnett said.

Overall, however, he wasn't exactly gushing about what the Buffaloes accomplished in 15 practices. "I felt like it went OK, didn't feel like we took a step backward, felt like we did make progress every day, not where we want to be but at least headed in the right direction," he said.

"Prognosis for the fall? It's so hard to tell right now."

If they listen to their coach, the Buffaloes shouldn't be overconfident. ■



Colorado Sports Information



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

Colorado will rely on a defense with eight starters and two others with starting experience returning. It "comes in with the highest degree of consistency, with the most experience returning and therefore is going to have to carry the burden of this football team early," said Coach **Gary Barnett**.

The Buffaloes also have depth at wide receiver, and **Bobby Purify** can catch out of the backfield.

QUESTION MARKS

Finding a quarterback and rebuilding the offensive line with only one returning starter were questions going into spring practice, and they remain questions. Of six upper-class offensive linemen, five missed most of the spring — three missed it all — because of injuries.

Place-kicking also is a concern because of inexperience.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Free safety **Medford Moorer** can impact a game on defense. In addition to being second on the team in tackles last season, he led the Buffaloes in interceptions with four, one of which he returned 51 yards for a touchdown against Texas Tech. He also returned a fumble 71 yards for a touchdown against Iowa State.

ACHILLES HEEL (OR FOOT)

Place-kicking was a problem last season. The Buffaloes missed on 15 field goal attempts and three extra-point kicks.

4th

**NORTH
DIVISION**

2002 RECORD: 9-5 CONFERENCE FINISH: 7-1

A 31	Colorado St. (Denver)	L, 19-14
S 7	San Diego State	W 34-14
S 14	USC	L, 40-3
S 21	@ UCLA	W, 31-17
O 5	Kansas State	W, 35-31
O 12	@ Kansas	W, 53-29
O 19	Baylor	W, 34-0
O 26	Texas Tech	W, 37-13
N 2	@ Oklahoma	L, 27-11
N 9	@ Missouri	W, 42-35 (ot)
N 16	Iowa State	W, 41-27
N 29	@ Nebraska	W, 28-13
D 7	%Oklahoma	L, 29-7
D 28	&Wisconsin	L, 31-28 (ot)

%Big 12 Championship, Houston, Texas
&Alamo Bowl, San Antonio, Texas

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

ZWR	Derek McCoy	6-3	205	Sr.	DE	Gabe Nyenhuis	6-4	265	Sr.
	Ron Monteilh	6-1	190	Jr.		James Garee	6-5	250	So.
XWR	John Donahoe	6-0	185	Sr.	DT	Sam Wilder	6-5	275	Jr.
	D.J. Hackett	6-3	195	Sr.		DeAndre Fluellen	6-1	290	Sr.
ST	Clint O'Neal	6-6	290	So.	DT	Brandon Dabdoub	6-1	285	Jr.
	Del Seales	6-6	270	Fr.		Vaka Manupuna	6-1	280	So.
SG	Karl Allis	6-5	310	Sr.	DE	Marques Harris	6-2	230	Sr.
	Jack Tipton	6-4	280	Fr.		Matt McChesney	6-4	280	Jr.
C	Mark Fenton	6-4	295	Fr.	ILB	Sean Tufts	6-4	235	Sr.
	Taylor Landry	6-0	275	Fr.		Chris Hollis	6-1	235	So.
TG	Marwan Hage	6-3	295	Sr.	ILB	Andrew Ward	6-2	230	So.
	Mike Sutton	6-6	325	Fr.		Jason Ackermann	6-2	215	Fr.
TT	Gary Moore	6-7	330	So.	SS	Akarika Dawn	6-2	220	So.
	Frederick Staugh	6-5	275	Fr.		Kyle Griffith	6-2	205	So.
TE	Quinn Synniewski	6-7	250	Sr.	WS	Brian Iwuh	6-1	210	So.
	Jesse Wallace	6-3	235	Jr.		Clyde Surrell	5-10	185	Sr.
QB	Joel Klatt	6-1	195	So.	FS	Medford Moorer	6-2	195	Sr.
	James Cox	6-3	210	Fr.		Tyrone Henderson	6-0	185	Fr.
TB	Brian Calhoun	5-10	195	So.	CB	Sammy Joseph	6-1	180	Fr.
and	Bobby Purify	6-0	200	Sr.		A.J. Anderson	6-0	170	So.
FB	Lawrence Vickers	6-2	225	So.	CB	Phil Jackson	6-1	190	Sr.
	J.P. diZerega	6-2	230	Jr.		Allen Mackey	5-11	185	Jr.
PK	J.T. Eberly	6-1	205	Jr.	P	John Torp	6-2	195	So.

Players with starting experience in bold

IOWA STATE CYCLONES

Even though Seneca Wallace has departed, Iowa State Coach Dan McCarney remains optimistic that his program can continue to compete at a high level, that it won't slide.

Finding a quarterback to replace the versatile Wallace isn't easy. "I don't know that we'll ever have anybody with quite the athleticism Seneca had," said McCarney.

"But we've got a good nucleus of kids coming back that have played, and I think whoever the quarterback will be will have the supporting cast to be better this year."

The Cyclones have 16 starters, including nine on defense, and both kickers returning. Plus, "there's a lot of character on this team," McCarney said. "We're excited about the fall."

Tackle Jordan Carstens, nose guard Nick Leaders, middle linebacker Brandon Brown and strong safety JaMaine Billups are among the reasons for that excitement on defense.

"Our defense this year starts with Jordan Carstens; there's no doubt about it," said McCarney. The 6-foot-5, 303-pound senior provides the push up front, as evidenced by his numbers last season: 103 tackles, including 13 for losses totaling 53 yards, five sacks and 27 quarterback hurries.

"If he can stay healthy, I think he can be one of the best defensive linemen in all of college football," McCarney said. "I don't say that often about anyone, but I really feel that strong about him."

Leaders, who has gained 20 pounds since the Humanitarian Bowl game, started as a true freshman, while Brown was second on the team in tackles with 137, including six sacks.

Billups, a converted running back, "showed that moving him to defense was one of the best moves we've made since I've been here at Iowa State," said McCarney.

The other returning starters on defense are free safety Marc Timmons, cornerbacks Ellis Hobbs III, and Anthony Forrest, end Tyson Smith and injury-plagued linebacker Chris Whitaker.

The strength of the offense is a group of receivers described by McCarney as the best he's had in Ames, including Lane Danielson, Jack Whitver, Jamaul Montgomery and Lance Young.

Danielson led the team with 63 catches for 1,073 yards and three touchdowns. The other three all caught at least 36 passes, and Young and Montgomery combined for 11 touchdowns.

Tailbacks Hiawatha Rutland and Michael Wagner

caught 32 passes between them, giving the Cyclones' new quarterback, whoever he will be, plenty of throwing options.

Junior Cris Love emerged from spring practice atop the depth chart at quarterback, followed by redshirted freshman Austin Flynn and junior Wayne Terry, who was sidelined the final two weeks by a broken thumb. However, "it's definitely a three-man race," McCarney said.

"It's up for grabs. It's way too close to call."

Love is the only one with experience, albeit limited as Wallace's back-up. He's "big and strong," said McCarney, with a "real good arm." And "he has improved his speed."

Flynn was highly regarded coming out of high school in Deer Park, Texas, and "we felt that in

his second year here he'd have a chance to go after the No. 1 spot," McCarney said.

Terry "probably has the strongest arm of the three and just needs experience," he said.

Terry, a junior college transfer, and Flynn played on the scout team last season as redshirts.

Even though they have different strengths at this point, McCarney doesn't anticipate the offense looking significantly different depending on which one of the three is taking the snaps.



Defensive tackle Jordan Carstens had 103 tackles, including 13 for losses and five sacks.

The Cyclones have used a similar offense under the direction of Wallace and his predecessor Sage Rosenfels, and "we'd really like to stay as close to that as we can," said McCarney.

He wouldn't be averse to using more than one of the three. "I'm not wild about it, but if that's what it takes for this team to function and for us to win, then we'll sure do it," he said.

"It's not what we've done here the last eight years, but if that's what it ends up being to win a game and to put our offense in the best position to score points, then that's sure what we'll do. But I'd really like to go into our opener on Aug. 30 knowing who our starter is and who our reliever is."

One thing Iowa State has done in seven of McCarney's eight seasons is produce a 1,000-yard rusher. The Cyclones didn't do that last season. Rather, it was tailback by committee.

Rutland headed the committee, gaining 614 of the committee's 1,461 yards. He emerged from the spring as the starter, but Michael Wagner and Brian Thompson, other members of the committee, are back, plus Stevie Hicks, a highly regarded redshirted freshman will join the mix. Hicks "is one of the most talented running backs we've recruited since I've been here," said McCarney.

Whether or not Rutland and the other backs have room to run will depend on an offensive line built around returning starters Bob Montgomery,

Casey Shelton and Cale Stubbe.

Montgomery, who earned all-conference recognition as a junior, is the best of the group. In fact, "I expect him to be one of the best offensive linemen around next year," McCarney said.

True freshman Aaron Brant graduated high school and went through spring practice, climbing to the top of the depth chart at right guard.

"His maturity is way beyond his age," said McCarney. "It's always going to take time at that position, and he's not where he needs to be yet."

"But I've seen very few young offensive linemen come as far as Aaron has."

Place-kicker Adam Benike, who walked on, is an all-conference candidate, and punter Tony Yelk, the back-up place-kicker, has averaged 43.1 yards on 91 punts for his career, to rank second in school history. Even so, Troy Blankenship finished as the starter, averaging 40.8 yards on 20 punts.

The bottom line in Ames is, Wallace might be gone but McCarney remains up-beat. "We got a lot done," he said following spring practice. "I'm proud of this team's improvement." ■



Iowa State Sports Information

Left guard Bob Montgomery, a second-team All-Big 12 selection, has started 24 consecutive games.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

The Cyclones have depth at wide receiver and running back on offense and plenty of experience on the first-team defense, headed by tackle **Jordan Carstens**, second-team All-Big 12 last season.

QUESTION MARKS

Coach **Dan McCarney** must settle on a replacement for **Seneca Wallace** at quarterback, and the Cyclones will be tested in conference play. The Big 12's interdivisional scheduling rotation again has them playing both Texas and Oklahoma, as well as Texas Tech in a three-week span.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Senior wide receiver **Lane Danielsen** caught 63 passes for a school-record 1,073 yards and three touchdowns, not bad for a player who walked on from Dike, Iowa.

REAPING THE REWARDS

McCarney received a 3 1/2-year contract extension in early January, increasing his annual salary to \$925,000 through June of 2010. The extension would seem to be warranted. Annual football revenue has increased from \$9.1 million in 1999 to almost \$14 million in 2002. In the past three seasons, the Cyclones have won 23 games and played in three bowls.

DEFENSIVE IMPROVEMENT

McCarney's first Iowa State team in 1995 allowed an average of just under 300 rushing yards per game. Last season, the Cyclones limited opponents to 175 rushing yards per game.

5th
NORTH
DIVISION

2002 RECORD: 7-7 CONFERENCE FINISH: 4-4

A 24	#Florida State	L, 38-31
A 31	Kansas	W, 45-3
S 7	Tennessee Tech	W, 58-6
S 14	@ Iowa	W, 36-31
S 21	Troy State	W, 42-12
S 28	Nebraska	W, 36-14
O 12	Texas Tech	W, 31-17
O 19	@ Oklahoma	L, 49-3
O 26	@ Texas	L, 21-10
N 2	Missouri	W, 42-35
N 9	@ Kansas State	L, 58-7
N 16	@ Colorado	L, 41-27
N 23	Connecticut	L, 37-20
D 31	@ Boise State	L, 34-16

#Eddie Robinson Classic, Kansas City, Mo.
@Humanitarian Bowl, Boise, Idaho

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

SE	Jack Whitver	5-10 183 Sr.	RE	Tyson Smith	6-2 242 Sr.
	Lance Young	6-0 174 Sr.		Korey Smith	6-4 232 Fr.
LT	Casey Shelton	6-5 295 Sr.	DT	Jordan Carstens	6-5 303 Sr.
	Johannes Egbers	6-2 282 So.		Tim TeBrink	6-3 284 Jr.
LG	Bob Montgomery	6-2 306 Sr.	NG	Nick Leaders	6-2 290 So.
	Colin Menard	6-3 202 Sr.		Brent Nelson	6-3 290 Jr.
C	Luke VanderSanden	6-2 305 Jr.	END	Cephus Johnson	6-2 245 So.
	Matt Bockas	6-0 284 Sr.		Beau Klaffke	6-3 262 Fr.
RG	Aaron Brant	6-7 307 Fr.	SLB	Nik Moser	6-0 196 So.
	Seth Zehr	6-5 271 Fr.		Erik Anderson	6-0 224 Jr.
RT	Cale Stubbe	6-3 302 Jr.	MLB	Brandon Brown	5-10 229 Jr.
	Kory Pence	6-4 311 So.		Kyle Smith	6-2 227 Fr.
TE	Brett Kellogg	6-2 252 Jr.	WLB	Joe Woodley	5-10 227 Sr.
	Kenny Segin	5-4 255 Jr.		Matthew Robertson	6-1 224 Fr.
QB	Cris Love	6-5 214 Jr.	LCB	Anthony Forrest	6-0 192 Jr.
	Austin Flynn	6-1 186 Fr.		Johnny Smith	5-11 170 Sr.
RB	Hiawatha Rutland	6-0 202 Sr.	SS	Ja'Maine Billups	5-9 202 Sr.
	Stevie Hicks	6-2 210 Fr.		Gabe Bakker	5-10 195 Jr.
WR	Lane Danielsen	6-0 192 Sr.	FS	Marc Timmons	5-8 162 Sr.
	David Banks-Bursey	5-8 172 Sr.		Steve Pans	6-1 193 So.
FL	Jamaul Montgomery	6-0 197 Sr.	RCB	Ellis Hobbs	5-7 183 Jr.
	Jon Davis	6-3 191 Fr.		Harold Clewis	5-8 193 Sr.
PK	Adam Benike	5-10 230 Sr.	P	Troy Blankenship	6-0 196 So.

Players with starting experience in bold.

KANSAS JAYHAWKS

There's a new attitude at Kansas under second-year Coach Mark Mangino.

"I think our kids really understand how to work, how to make themselves better players and work to develop a good team," Mangino said following spring practice.

He wasn't questioning the effort in his first season, a 2-10 disaster that included 0-8 in conference play. "The kids last year gave effort. But this is truly Big 12 effort," he said.

"I've said a number of times, we haven't spent any time this spring coaching effort. Last spring, we had to coach effort. We had to get our players to develop good work habits on the practice field and in the weight room.

"It takes time when you have a new coach."

It also takes more than effort and good work habits to be successful. Even though "we're a better football team than we were a year ago," said Mangino, "we've got a long way to go.

"We'll see how that translates into wins."

On paper, at least, Big 12 victories again will be scarce. "We're a bigger, stronger, faster team," Mangino said. But the Jayhawks still lack the talent and depth to win consistently.

As a result, Mangino recruited 12 junior college players, among them center Joe Vaughn and tight end Lyonel Anderson, both of whom distinguished themselves in spring practice.

Vaughn, who finished the spring atop the depth chart, is "everything you want in a center and offensive lineman," Mangino said. "He's tough. He's hard-nosed. He's not a real tall guy, so he plays with a great low center of gravity. He uses his hands extremely well, and he's just tough as nails.

"He earned the respect of the kids almost instantaneously."

The 6-foot-3, 240-pound Anderson was similarly

impressive in the spring, said Mangino. "He's learned a lot. He's a tight end that can catch the ball and get yardage after the catch, (has) really good athleticism, made some fine, circus catches. He's another kid with a great attitude.

"I told our staff if the rest of the junior college kids that come in have the attitude, work ethic and toughness of the two guys that are here now, we're going to be in pretty good shape."

Anderson still has to develop as a blocker to reach the

level of last season's starter, Adrian Jones. In fact, Jones was such a strong blocker that Mangino asked him to move to tackle.

Even though he's a senior, Jones agreed to the position switch.

"We knew he had the qualities to be a good tight end," Mangino said. "But the more I looked at him, the more I thought he has the qualities to be a great offensive tackle."

Mangino asked Jones if he would try tackle for a few practices in the spring and if he wasn't comfortable, he could return to tight end. Jones had "an awesome spring," according to Mangino, realizing that "he's a natural for that position. He never came back to me to ask about tight end anymore."

Jones didn't just move to tackle; he moved to the all important left

tackle position, where he will be responsible for protecting quarterback Bill Whittemore's blindside.

Jones has to gain some weight. He played at 260 pounds last season. But "he's awfully quick. He has great feet. He learned to pass set very quickly," said Mangino. "He does an excellent job of getting the second-level defenders on the run game. He's a great base blocker.

"All he has to do is put on about 12 to 15 pounds of lean body weight over the summer and I really, truly believe that he will have a chance to play tackle at the next

Kansas Sports Information



Quarterback Bill Whittemore was honored as Big 12 Offensive Newcomer of the Year. He threw for 11 touchdowns and rushed for 11 more.

level. He is just a natural."

Whittemore, another junior college transfer, was among the few bright spots last season, earning Big 12 Offensive Newcomer of the Year recognition from conference coaches.

In nine games, he completed 151-of-305 passes (49.5 percent) for 1,666 yards and 11 touchdowns, with six interceptions, and rushed for 549 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Whittemore and Jones are among six starters returning from an offense that ranked last in the conference and 105th nationally. The Jayhawks also ranked last in the conference in total defense (112th nationally) and scoring defense. Seven starters return from that unit.

Defensively, "we're getting better," said Mangino. "I feel good about the kids we put on the field this spring on defense. We made some tremendous strides."

Nine of the junior college transfers play defense, and "we're hoping many of them will contribute in a hurry. But you just don't know that until they get here . . . into our routine," he said.

Remuise Johnson had an impact at cornerback last season after transferring from Garden City (Kan.) Community College (and redshirting), starting every game and intercepting six passes.

Curtis Ansel, another Garden City transfer, was a semifinalist for the Ray Guy Award as the nation's best punter, averaging 42.5 yards on 83 attempts.

Except for Ansel and Greg Heaggans, who ranked third in the conference in kickoff returns, the Jayhawks need to improve in the kicking game, too.

They ranked last in the conference in punt returns and field goals.

That's the reality with which Mangino must deal in his second season. But he remains positive.

"The kids that are with us right now have got a tremendous work ethic," he said. "It's one of the hardest working ball clubs I've been around in terms of just flat work ethic."

"They come every day ready to go, very few problems, no whining, no 'this is too hard, this is too tough.' We don't hear those things that maybe we heard a year ago, a little bit."

"Last year's club worked hard. This year's club works harder and smarter, too. They understand our systems. They know what we want. They know what the expectations are."

The odds are, however, those expectations will exceed the reality. ■



Kansas Sports Information

Punter Curtis Ansel was a semifinalist for the Ray Guy Award in his first season with the Jayhawks. He averaged 42.5 yards per punt.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

Quarterback **Bill Whittemore** was directly involved in two-thirds of the team's touchdowns last season, 11 rushing and 11 passing, and punter **Curtis Ansel** is among the Big 12's best.

QUESTION MARKS

The Jayhawks need to improve in just about every area. In addition to the statistical categories already mentioned, they ranked last in the conference and 109th nationally in pass efficiency defense. Opponents completed 55.3 percent of their passes for 2,594 yards and 27 touchdowns.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Whittemore had an "outstanding spring," following knee surgery, said Mangino. "He was throwing the ball much better, (showed a) stronger arm and (was) moving around well."

The Jayhawks had 3,801 yards of total offense last season, with Whittemore accounting for 2,215.

SUPPORT FROM ON HIGH

Even though Athletic Director **Al Bohl** was dismissed prior to the departure of basketball coach **Roy Williams**, Mangino isn't concerned about job security. "The departure of the athletic director has very little effect on the football program," he said. "The chancellor and I have been in constant conversation."

Chancellor **Robert Hemenway** "has talked to me about the vision I have for our football program when I first got here. He's supportive and wants us to win."

MONEY WELL SPENT

Kansas opted out of a game at San Diego State in favor of a home game against Jacksonville State, an NCAA Division I-AA school in Alabama. The change cost the Jayhawks \$50,000.

6th
NORTH DIVISION

2002 RECORD: 2-10 CONFERENCE FINISH: 0-8

A 31	@ Iowa State	L, 38-31
S 7	@ UNLV	L, 31-20
S 14	SW Missouri St.	W, 44-24
S 21	Bowling Green	L, 39-16
S 28	@ Tulsa	W, 43-33
O 5	@ Baylor	L, 35-32
O 12	Colorado	L, 53-29
O 19	Texas A&M	L, 47-22
O 26	@ Missouri	L, 36-12
N 2	Kansas State	L, 64-0
N 9	@ Nebraska	L, 45-7
N 16	Oklahoma State	L, 55-20

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	Brandon Rideau	6-4 190 Jr.	DE	Cory Kipp	6-4 280 Sr.
	Dominic Roux	5-11 175 Fr.		Kyle Knighton	6-3 250 Fr.
LT	Adrian Jones	6-5 260 Sr.	N	Tim Allen	6-1 260 So.
	David Ochoa	6-4 250 Fr.		Sid Bachmann	6-2 270 Sr.
LG	Bob Whitaker	6-5 325 Fr.	DT	Travis Watkins	6-4 295 Jr.
or	Tony Coker	6-5 320 Jr.		John Cannon	6-1 230 Fr.
C	Joe Vaughn	6-1 280 Jr.	DE	David McMillan	6-3 240 Jr.
	Justin Henry	6-4 285 So.		Reggie Curry	6-2 245 Sr.
RG	Justin Henry	6-4 285 So.	OLB	Banks Floodman	6-3 230 So.
	Nick McCaslin	6-2 285 Jr.		Glenn Robinson	6-3 235 Sr.
RT	Danny Lewis	6-4 295 Sr.	MLB	Kevin Kane	6-1 220 So.
	Travis Dambach	6-4 260 Fr.		Greg Tyree	6-0 245 Jr.
TE	Lyonel Anderson	6-3 235 Jr.	OLB	Brandon Perkins	6-1 220 So.
	Denver Latimore	6-2 250 Sr.		Darren Rus	6-3 215 So.
WR	Derick Mills	5-7 165 Sr.	CB	Remuise Johnson	5-8 170 Sr.
	Charles Gordon	5-11 165 Fr.		Ronnie Amadi	5-11 185 So.
QB	Bill Whittemore	6-0 205 Sr.	FS	Tony Stubbs	5-10 200 Jr.
	Brian Luke	6-5 220 So.		Zach Dyer	6-2 210 Sr.
TB	Clark Green	5-11 200 So.	SS	Nick Reid	6-4 220 So.
	Harold McClendon	5-10 200 Sr.		Dan Coke	5-11 215 Sr.
WR	Mark Simmons	5-11 175 So.	CB	Donnie Amadi	5-10 180 So.
	Gary Heaggans	6-2 200 Jr.		Kenneth Thompson	5-11 180 Fr.
K	Johnny Beck	6-1 215 Jr.	P	Curtis Ansel	6-1 210 Sr.

Players with starting experience in bold

OKLAHOMA SOONERS

Jason White should be ready to take over the No. 1 quarterback's job that probably would have been his the past two seasons if not for a pair of knee injuries. But he'll have to compete for it.

"We're not much on just giving somebody something, without allowing it to work its way out," Coach Bob Stoops said during the Big 12 coaches' post-spring teleconference.

"That's at all positions, not just quarterback."

Nevertheless, quarterback is a focus as Oklahoma prepares for another conference and national championship run. The Sooners would appear to have key elements for such a run, a veteran defense, the best offensive line during Stoops' tenure as head coach and a solid kicking game.

So the quarterback could be the deciding factor in whether they come up short, as they have the past two seasons, or they play for the national title — which they won three seasons ago.

Even though he has started only four games during his career, White has shown the skills to lead Oklahoma to the top. He has completed 63.1 percent of his passes and was averaging 4.9 yards per carry until suffering the first of two torn anterior cruciate ligaments against Nebraska in 2001.

Earlier that season against Kansas, he rushed for 117 yards and passed for 151 yards, becoming the first Sooner quarterback since 1989 to rush and throw for 100 yards in the same game.

Last season, he tore the other ACL in the second game against Alabama.

He was held out of major scrimmages during the spring, even though "it was more our just wanting to be real conservative," said Stoops. "As far as the question could he have gone, he was ready to go."

"But we didn't want to push it. I didn't feel he probably felt comfortable yet."

White played in the spring game, completing 7-of-13 passes for 70 yards with two interceptions. Brent Rawls, Paul Thompson and Noah Allen threw a combined four interceptions, also.

Rawls threw the game's only touchdown pass.

The six interceptions were an indication of where Oklahoma's strength lies. Nine starters return on defense, including nickel back Antonio Perkins, cornerback Derrick Strait and free safety Brandon Everage, who intercepted 16 passes between them as the Sooners led the nation with 25.

The losses on defense were significant: cornerback Andre Woolfolk and end Jimmy Wilkerson, who left early for the NFL. But the Sooners could be even stronger than last season, when they ranked sixth nationally in scoring defense, 10th in total defense and 14th in rushing defense.

Donte Nicholson, for example, was "awfully impressive" during the spring, Stoops said. Nicholson is a 6-foot-2, 210-pound safety who transferred from Mount San Antonio, Calif., Community College at mid-year and went through spring practice.

Even with nine returning starters on defense, "he's going to improve us," said Stoops. "He's going to give us that safety play we're used to, big, strong force, a lot of ability, great tackler."

"He's going to give us that strong force we missed a year ago."

Stoops said he and his brother Mike, the defensive coordinator, agree that Nicholson is "probably the most natural safety we've ever coached" and "picks everything up really quite easily."

The talent around him certainly helps. Tackle Tommie Harris, linebackers Teddy Lehman and Lance Mitchell and end Jonathan Jackson all are being promoted as post-season awards candidates.

Harris was a first-team All-American despite being hampered by a groin injury. Lehman was a consensus All-



Oklahoma will try to keep quarterback Jason White healthy for his senior season. White's last two seasons have been cut short by knee injuries.

American and one of three finalists for the Butkus Award as the nation's best collegiate linebacker, after being involved in 112 tackles, including 17 for losses and two sacks.

Mitchell was the Big 12 "Defensive Newcomer of the Year," with 124 tackles, including 19 for losses and three sacks. And Jackson led the team in quarterback hurries, with 18.

Despite ranking ninth nationally in pass efficiency defense, Oklahoma's two losses last season were a result of breakdowns in pass coverage. Texas A&M's Reggie McNeal and Oklahoma State's Josh Fields completed a combined 26-of-40 passes for 548 yards and eight touchdowns.

But the Sooners contained Washington State's Jason Gesser in the Rose Bowl.

The primary offensive weapons in that 34-14 victory, quarterback Nate Hybl (selected as the game's MVP) and running back Quentin Griffin, are gone. But the foundation of what Stoops has described as "our best offensive line" returns in center Vince Carter and tackles Jammal Brown and Wes Sims.

Wide receivers Will Peoples and Mark Clayton are the other returning starters on offense.

Griffin will be missed. He provided balance in a nearly 50-50 split in passing and rushing yardage, running for 1,884 yards,

catching 35 passes for 264 yards and scoring 18 touchdowns.

Even without the diminutive, do-everything Griffin, however, "we think we've got a chance to be our most diverse and balanced offense that we've had," Stoops said.

Add place-kicker Trey DiCarlo, who was successful on 16-of-22 field goal attempts and scored 106 points, and punter Blake Ferguson, and Oklahoma has the makings of a title contender.

If the Sooners are to get to the Big 12 championship game in Kansas City and then move on to the BCS national championship game in the Sugar Bowl could depend on the play of White, or whoever earns the starting job at quarterback, in a competition that will continue into two-a-days.

White will be in the thick of things; Stoops concedes that much. "We feel like he's progressed in a great way from where he was at a year ago," said Stoops. "We'll see where he's at in the fall.

"He'll compete for it like he always does. He's a great competitor, and he's got a chance." But "there's a lot of time between now and the first game. We'll see who does what." ■



Sooners Illustrated

Weakside linebacker Teddy Lehman was a consensus All-American and one of three finalists for the Butkus Award as the nation's top linebacker.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

The Sooners are loaded on defense, with nine starters returning. Many of those returning starters are high-profile players, including tackle **Tommie Harris** and linebacker **Teddy Lehman**.

QUESTION MARKS

The health of quarterback **Jason White** is a concern. In addition to being sidelined the past two seasons by ACL injuries, he was sidelined by back and ankle injuries as a true freshman and was granted a medical redshirt. Versatile running back **Quentin Griffin** also must be replaced.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Lehman has the speed to play sideline-to-sideline in a tradition of great Oklahoma linebackers. He shared the award as the Sooners' defensive MVP with free safety **Brandon Everage** in 2002. But singling out one player from the Sooners' talented defense is difficult, if not impossible.

UNCERTAIN STATUS

Coach **Bob Stoops** suspended Everage as a result of an off-the-field incident in the spring. "We'll wait and allow the legal process and everything else to work its way through," said Stoops. "At some point, we'll evaluate and find out whether Brandon's with us or not."

STADIUM EXPANSION

The largest home crowd in Oklahoma history was 75,989 for the Nebraska game in 2000. But that record will be broken when the Sooners open against North Texas on Aug. 30. Memorial Stadium will have 8,000 more seats, and 27 sky suites, as part of a \$65 million expansion project.



2002 RECORD: 11-2 CONFERENCE FINISH: 6-2

A 30	@ Tulsa	W, 37-0
S 7	Alabama	W, 37-27
S 14	UTEP	W, 68-0
S 28	South Florida	W, 31-14
O 5	@ Missouri	W, 31-24
O 12	Texas (Dallas)	W, 35-24
O 19	Iowa State	W, 49-3
N 2	Colorado	W, 27-11
N 9	@ Texas A&M	L, 30-26
N 16	@ Baylor	W, 49-9
N 23	Texas Tech	W, 60-15
N 30	@ Oklahoma St.	L, 38-28
D 7	%Colorado	W, 29-7
J 1	& Washington St.	W, 34-14

%Big 12 Championship, Houston, Texas
&Rose Bowl, Pasadena, Calif.

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	Will Peoples	6-1 190 Jr.	LE	Jonathan Jackson	6-4 240 Jr.
	Jejuan Jenkins	5-1 160 So.		Calvin Thibodeaux	6-1 248 So.
LT	Wes Sims	6-5 316 Jr.	DT	Tommie Harris	6-3 293 Jr.
	Brett Rayl	6-7 302 So.		Dusty Dvoracek	6-3 290 Jr.
LG	Kelvin Chaisson	6-5 290 So.	DT	Kory Klein	6-2 283 Sr.
	Chris Bush	6-4 280 So.		Lynn McGruder	6-3 290 Jr.
C	Vince Carter	6-3 283 Jr.	RE	Dan Cody	6-5 268 Jr.
	Chris Bush	6-4 280 So.		Larry Birdine	6-5 240 Fr.
RG	Davin Joseph	6-4 294 So.	SLB	Pasha Jackson	6-3 240 Sr.
	Abner Estrada	6-3 275 So.		Russell Dennison	6-3 238 So.
RT	Jammal Brown	6-6 320 Jr.	MLB	Lance Mitchell	6-3 244 Sr.
	Chris Bush	6-4 260 So.		Wayne Chambers	6-3 239 So.
TE	Lance Donley	6-4 232 Sr.	WLB	Teddy Lehman	6-2 240 Sr.
	Bubba Moses	6-3 234 Jr.		Gayron Allen	5-10 216 Jr.
QB	Jason White	6-2 230 Sr.	CB	Derrick Strait	5-11 194 Sr.
	Brent Rawls	6-5 205 So.		Jason Carter	5-11 183 Fr.
RB	KeJuan Jones	5-10 190 So.	SS	Donte Nicholson	6-2 210 Jr.
	Donta Hickson	5-10 198 So.		Brodney Pool	6-3 200 So.
RB	Renaldo Works	6-1 225 Sr.	FS	Brandon Everage	6-0 194 Sr.
	J.D. Runnels	6-1 230 So.		Brodney Pool	6-3 200 So.
WR	Mark Clayton	5-11 174 Jr.	CB	Antonio Perkins	6-0 192 Jr.
	Travis Wilson	6-3 218 Fr.		Mark Bradley	6-2 190 Jr.
PK	Trey DiCarlo	6-0 180 So.	P	Blake Ferguson	6-0 190 Jr.

Players with starting experience in bold

TEXAS LONGHORNS

At most schools, back-to-back 11-win seasons capped by bowl victories would be cause for incessant celebration.

Welcome to the University of Texas, where the expectations are as immense as the state itself.

Mack Brown has no one to blame but himself for the lofty hopes of the Longhorn faithful. After all, he is the man who has guided the program to at least nine wins in each of the last five seasons.

More importantly, he has resurrected the recruiting magic that has brought blue chip prospects to Austin by the busload year after year since his arrival in 1998.

A year ago, Brown's squad built on its success of 2001 and found it once-again mentioned among the national title contenders until late in the season. With an 11-2 record and a No. 6 final ranking, the Horns posted back-to-back 11-win seasons for the first time in school history and consecutive Top 10 finishes for the first time since 1977-78. The Longhorns also won or shared the Big 12 South title for the third time in the last four seasons.

That was last season.

In the what-have-you-done-for-me-lately department sits Brown, who heads into his sixth season ready to face the same lofty expectations while trying to break in a new quarterback. With Chris Simms off to the NFL, it is time for junior Chance Mock to take his turn under center. Mock won the job with an impressive spring, fending off much-ballyhooed redshirt freshman Vince Young.

After three years of waiting in the wings, Mock is ready to step in and produce.

"I felt like I needed time to learn the quarterback position," he said of his time on the sidelines. "There's nothing they can throw at me that I haven't expected or already seen. I've got three years of pictures."

This season, those pictures will show Mock doing

things that Simms was not as adept at, such as moving outside of the pocket and running some option. While Young may be the quarterback of the future, the team is Mock's for the time being. There is little concern about a learning curve for Mock because he will be backed by a supporting cast that features the most talented group of receivers in the nation.

That collective sigh of relief coming from Austin this

past winter was the result of superstar receiver Roy Williams announcing his intention to return for his senior season. Williams possesses a pair of the most reliable hands in the game and breakaway speed that is unheard of for a player his size (6-4, 210 pounds). As a junior, the two-time All-Big 12 selection had 64 catches for 1,140 yards and 12 touchdowns.

Overshadowed by the brilliance of Williams is senior B.J. Johnson, who has excellent speed and gives the Longhorns another reason to make cornerbacks cringe.

As if Williams and Johnson aren't enough of a handful, Texas also has the talented trio of Sloan Thomas, Tony Jeffery and Robert Timmons waiting in the wings to give the Longhorns the deepest group of receivers in the Big 12.

Although the same

can't be said of the running back position, Texas is not exactly hurting in that department. Junior Cedric Benson is coming off of a disappointing season by his standards. Of course, when you run for 1,293 yards and call it a disappointment, it is obvious that the standards are extremely high. The running game as a whole struggled as the Longhorns finished 74th in the nation at 135.5 yards per game. Benson knows that in order for the offense to be successful, that statistic must improve.

"We've made up our mind that we'll be running the ball a lot better," Benson said. "We're going to be the No. 1 run-

Texas Sports Information



Split end Roy Williams averaged 17.8 yards on his 64 receptions and scored 12 touchdowns.

ning offense in the country. I can see that."

Sophomore Selvin Young emerged last season to give Texas a change of pace to the power game of Benson. Young has dazzling speed and will continue to see his share of the carries, but Benson is firmly entrenched as the starter for the time being.

Benson and Young will be running behind a restructured offensive line, following the departures of Robbie Doane, Derrick Dockery and Antwan Kirk-Hughes. There will be heated competition at the center position, as sophomore Will Allen was impressive in his bid to replace incumbent starter Jason Glynn during spring practice. Junior Stevie Lee was moved from defense to help shore up the offensive line and could earn a starting spot at either tackle or guard.

The possibility remains that Lee could return to the defensive line, where the Longhorns will look to replace end Cory Redding, who led the team with 8 1/2 sacks and 22 tackles for losses a year ago.

Junior Austin Sendlein will compete against sophomores Brian Pickryl and Mike Williams for Redding's vacated spot. The rest of the defensive line is set, with senior Kalen Thornton at end and Marcus Tubbs and Rodrique Wright at the tackle positions. Pickryl was the odds-on favorite to win a starting spot this spring, but constant shoulder problems have



Texas Sports Information

Weakside linebacker Derrick Johnson led the defense with 119 tackles as a sophomore.

hindered his development.

There have been no problems with the development of junior linebacker Derrick Johnson, who led the Longhorns with 119 tackles in 2002. Johnson will be asked to play more zone coverage than he has in the past, which should be disruptive to opposing quarterbacks. Senior Reed Boyd, who registered 117 stops a year ago, and sophomore Garnet Smith round out the starting unit. Junior Aurmon Satchell and redshirt freshmen Marcus Myers and Brian Robison will also figure into the rotation at linebacker.

In the secondary, three starters return from a group that yielded the fewest passing yards in the Big 12 last season. The senior leaders of the group are cornerback Nathan Vasher, who is also one of the most dangerous punt returners in the nation, and safety Dakarai Pearson. Competing for the other starting corner spot are sophomores Cedric Griffin and Michael Huff, both of whom can play either secondary position.

As has been the case since Brown arrived, the Longhorns boast quality depth at every position, thanks to the recruiting efforts that have brought a parade of blue-chip players to Austin over the last five years. Longhorn fans are now expecting another kind of parade this fall — one celebrating a national title. ■ — *By Shawn Heilbron*



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

Where to begin? Led by **Roy Williams** and **B.J. Johnson**, the Longhorns have the deepest receiving corps in the nation. Their running backs aren't anything to sneeze at either.

QUESTION MARKS

Texas is looking for consistency at punter, something that it hasn't had in a number of years. Inexperience along the offensive line could cause trouble for a running game that was average in 2002.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Williams is a two-time All-Big 12 selection. He averaged 17.8 yards per catch last season. He has the speed, hands and size (6-4) to make life miserable for opposing defensive backs.

ARMED AND READY

With **Chance Mock** penciled in as the starter at quarterback and **Vincent Young** being heralded as the next big thing, sophomore **Matt Nordgren** sits third on the depth chart. Nordgren has a strong arm and prototypical size for a quarterback at 6-5, but serves as an example of how deep the Longhorns are at the skill positions.

BASEBALL FOR BENSON?

The Los Angeles Dodgers selected **Cedric Benson** in the 12th round of the 2001 amateur baseball draft and are paying for his education. After playing baseball in a limited capacity over the last two summers, Benson will test his diamond skills this summer and could choose to give up football in the future to pursue a baseball career.

2nd
SOUTH
DIVISION

2002 RECORD: 11-2 CONFERENCE FINISH: 6-2

A 31	North Texas	W, 27-0
S 14	@ North Carolina	W, 52-21
S 21	Houston	W, 41-11
S 28	@ Tulane	W, 49-0
O 5	Oklahoma State	W, 17-15
O 12	Oklahoma (Dallas)	L, 35-24
O 19	@ Kansas State	W, 17-14
O 26	Iowa State	W, 21-10
N 2	@ Nebraska	W, 27-24
N 9	Baylor	W, 41-0
N 16	@ Texas Tech	L, 42-38
N 29	Texas A&M	W, 50-20
J 1	&LSU	W, 35-20

& Cotton Bowl, Dallas, Texas

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

SE Roy Williams	6-4 210 Sr.	DE Austin Sendlein	6-3 265 Jr.
Sloan Thomas	6-2 200 Sr.	Kalen Jakes	6-5 260 So.
LT Jonathan Scott	6-7 297 So.	DT Marcus Tubbs	6-4 305 Sr.
Terrance Young	6-6 350 So.	Tully Janszen	6-4 250 Fr.
LG Tillman Holloway	6-3 315 Sr.	DT Rodrique Wright	6-5 320 So.
Stevie Lee	6-4 310 Jr.	Larry Dibles	6-4 280 So.
C Jason Glynn	6-2 275 Jr.	DE Kalen Thornton	6-3 270 Sr.
or Will Allen	6-6 297 So.	Chase Pittman	6-5 265 Fr.
RG Mike Garcia	6-3 315 So.	SLB Reed Boyd	6-3 235 Sr.
Trey Bates	6-5 300 Jr.	Brian Robison	6-3 240 Fr.
RT Justin Blalock	6-4 340 Fr.	MLB Garnet Smith	6-3 220 So.
William Winston	6-7 350 So.	or Aaron Harris	6-0 230 So.
TE David Thomas	6-3 220 So.	WLB Derrick Johnson	6-4 220 Jr.
Neale Tweedie	6-5 225 Fr.	Marcus Myers	6-3 220 Fr.
QB Chance Mock	6-2 215 Jr.	CB Nathan Vasher	5-11 180 Sr.
Vince Young	6-5 220 Fr.	Edorian McCullough	5-11 175 So.
TB Cedric Benson	6-0 205 Jr.	SS Matt Melton	6-0 195 Fr.
Selvin Young	6-0 195 So.	Tien Van Nguyen	5-11 190 Sr.
FB Eric Hall	6-3 250 So.	FS Dakarai Pearson	5-10 185 Sr.
Will Matthews	6-3 250 Jr.	Phillip Geiger	5-11 205 Jr.
FL B.J. Johnson	6-1 200 Sr.	Cedrick Griffin	6-2 190 So.
Tony Jeffery	6-2 175 Jr.	Edorian McCullough	5-11 175 So.
PK Dusty Mangum	5-11 170 Jr.	P Taylor Landin	6-2 200 So.

Players with starting experience in bold

OKLAHOMA STATE COWBOYS

They say success changes a man. It certainly has changed Oklahoma State quarterback Josh Fields.

This time last year, Fields was largely unknown in Big 12 Conference circles. Now he's a virtual lock for pre-season All-Big 12 honors.

Fields, a junior from Stillwater, Okla., had never started a college game before last fall. Sure, he'd come off the bench to rally the Cowboys to victory twice as a freshman — including a memorable upset over fourth-ranked Oklahoma — and had shown instinctive leadership skills in doing so.

But he had never led a team for an entire season.

Going into 2002, Fields stepped forward as the starter in the spring and won the job during two-a-days. Still, early in the season, some of his teammates had their doubts whether or not Fields was the man.

Fields displaced the popular Aso Pogi, who had started OSU's previous 17 games and ranked fifth in career passing yards. Also, Fields' record as a starter midway through his first year was just 2-4.

But Fields had an epiphany in the third game — he threw three interceptions in a loss to UCLA — and things began to change. The Cowboys nearly upset Texas in Austin, suffered a setback at Kansas State, then regrouped the following week against Nebraska.

Beating the Huskers for the first time in 41 years — a 24-21 OSU triumph — gave Fields and his teammates the confidence they needed to win six of their last seven, go to a bowl game for just the second time in 14 years and finish the year 8-5.

"I don't think it was because I had anything to prove," Fields said. "It was just me. I wanted to go out there and have success as much as those guys (his teammates) wanted to. One thing that really helped us was our whole team was hungry. We hadn't had a good winning season,

we'd never beaten some of the teams that we beat last year. It was just kind of a hunger."

Fields and the Cowboy offense finished with a bang:

— In OSU's last seven games, Fields threw for 276 yards per game, with a Big 12-best 20 touchdowns and just two interceptions, and set six school passing records.

— Wide receiver Rashaun Woods, who established several Big 12 and OSU records (107 receptions, 1,695 yards, 17 TDs), caught 51 passes for 1,106 yards and 11 scores in

the final seven games and earned first-team All-America recognition.

— Tailback Tatum Bell overcame an ankle injury to rush for 928 yards and score 11 TDs over the second half of the season.

"Towards the end of the season, we felt like we could score any time we had the ball," Fields said.

In a 38-28 upset of Oklahoma, Woods had 12 catches for a school-record 226 yards, while Fields completed 18 of 27 passes for 357 yards and four touchdowns against the nation's ninth-ranked defense.

Coach Les Miles, now in his third season, looks back on the 2002 turnaround and recalls "the character of the football team." He said losing 44-9 at Kansas State and beating Nebraska a week later in Stillwater "showed me more about this football team than any single week we had."

It's the kind of turnaround the Cowboys hope carries over into 2003. With eight starters back on offense and

seven on defense, as well as both kickers, Miles is hopeful — confident, even — that this year can be better if the Cowboys can avoid the slow starts that hurt them in Miles' first two seasons.

"We need to come prepared to play championship football and start the season ready to win," said Miles, the 2002 Big 12 coach of the year. "If we do that, we'll be playing at Arrowhead Stadium in the Big 12 championship game."



Wide receiver Rashaun Woods continues to rewrite the Oklahoma State record books. He caught 107 passes for 1,695 yards and 17 touchdowns in 2002.

Offensively, OSU might have the firepower to contend. Last year the Cowboys ranked 13th nationally in yards per game (411.1) and yards per play (5.99). OSU lost a pair of experienced receivers and a pair of experienced tackles, but hopes to have replaced them with more playmaking ability. The offensive line has three starters and three top backups back and led the Big 12 in fewest sacks allowed (17). Depth behind Bell is excellent, with Seymore Shaw and Vernand Morency rushing for 767 yards and eight touchdowns. Kicker Luke Phillips was a Groza Award candidate the last two years and has made 26-of-33 field goals in his first two years.

Depth behind Fields (Pogi transferred) and Woods, however, is a concern.



Oklahoma State Sports Information

The secondary is led by weak safety Elbert Craig, who was Oklahoma State's second leading tackler with 83 and intercepted two passes.

At wideout, redshirt freshman D'Juan Woods — another of Rashaun's little brothers — took a medical hardship after playing in a couple of games last year. He has similar ability to Rashaun but is raw. Sixth-year senior Gabe Lindsey, who led the team in receiving yards three years ago, is close to form after back surgery derailed him for nearly two years.

Defense is a concern. While the offense was tearing up opponents during the season-ending seven-game stretch, the defense allowed 27 points and 415.6 yards per game. The pass defense gave up a school record 3,171 yards (251.6 yards per game, 100th in Division I), and the Cowboys allowed 398.7 total yards per game (80th nationally).

The Cowboys hope improvements can be made with a recruiting class that was ranked as high as 14th by some services. Two high school standouts and a junior college transfer will compete to replace All-Big 12 defensive tackle and spiritual leader Kevin Williams, a top 10 pick in the NFL Draft. Issues at safety and nose guard also exist.

Four cornerbacks are experienced and blazing fast, and four linebackers are experienced but painfully young. Defensive coordinator Bill Clay doesn't want to gamble on transfers and freshman being ready for the Cowboys' Aug. 30 season-opener in Lincoln, so he spent half the spring testing proven players in new positions.

"We can't wait on who we signed to get here in August," Clay said, "because that's a short time to get ready to play Nebraska." ■ — By John E. Hoover

Redshirt freshman Jamie Beeghley was handed the backup quarterback duties in the spring because Fields was almost exclusively devoted to playing on the OSU baseball team. Beeghley may have to fight off a couple of incoming freshmen for the job, though, including Woods' youngest brother, Donovan.

At wideout, redshirt freshman D'Juan Woods — another of Rashaun's little brothers — took a medical hardship after playing in a couple of games last year. He has similar ability to Rashaun but is raw. Sixth-year senior Gabe Lindsey, who led the team in receiving yards three years ago, is close to form after back surgery derailed him for nearly two years.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

3rd

SOUTH DIVISION

STRENGTHS

The main ingredients in the explosive offense return, led by wide receiver **Rashaun Woods**, who could be college football's top playmaker. Quarterback **Josh Fields**, who set single-season OSU records for completions, attempts, yards and TDs is back, along with tailback **Tatum Bell**, who rushed for 1,096 yards last season and is bigger and stronger. Another weapon is kicker **Luke Phillips**, who has hit 26 field goals the past two seasons.

QUESTION MARKS

Because **Aso Pogi** transferred to Division II Central Oklahoma, no Cowboy QB other than Fields has taken a snap in a college game. Only four wideouts behind Woods have any game experience, and they combined for just 20 receptions and one TD last season. The defense lost four of its five best players from last year — when it allowed almost 400 yards per game — and will replace those losses with either freshmen or transfers.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Over the past two seasons, Woods has 187 catches and 27 touchdowns. He enters his senior season with 3,047 career yards, just 124 behind the OSU record of 3,171 set by **Hart Lee Dykes** (1985-88).

STAFF LOYALTY

When he was hired in December 2000, Coach **Les Miles** asked that roughly \$186,000 of his own salary be added instead to the school's budget for assistant coaches. That decision was repaid in December — with interest — when Miles and OSU agreed to a 7-year, \$10 million contract extension.

2002 RECORD: 8-5 CONFERENCE FINISH: 5-3

A 31	Louisiana Tech	L, 39-36
S 7	Northern Iowa	W, 45-10
S 14	UCLA	L, 38-24
S 21	SMU	W, 52-16
O 5	@ Texas	L, 17-15
O 12	@ Kansas State	L, 44-9
O 19	Nebraska	W, 24-21
N 2	Texas A&M	W, 28-23
N 9	@ Texas Tech	L, 49-24
N 16	@ Kansas	W, 55-20
N 23	Baylor	W, 63-28
N 30	Oklahoma	W, 38-28
J 1	@ Southern Miss.	W, 33-23

vs. Houston Bowl, Houston, Texas

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	Rashaun Woods	6-2	195	Sr.	RE	Greg Richmond	6-2	245	Sr.
	Kenneth Williams	6-4	200	So.		Darrell Smith	6-2	245	Fr.
LT	Matt Hardison	6-6	285	Sr.	DT	Clay Coe	6-2	285	Jr.
	Doug Bond	6-3	280	Fr.		Mike Williams	6-0	300	Sr.
LG	Chris Akin	6-2	290	Jr.	NG	Kyle Hix	6-5	290	So.
	Corey Curtis	6-5	285	So.		Marcus Craig	5-11	300	Jr.
C	Ben Buie	6-2	310	Jr.	DE	Antonio Smith	6-3	270	Jr.
	Bryon Machado	6-2	280	So.		Kheem Smith	6-4	260	Sr.
RG	Sam Mayes	6-4	305	Jr.	LB	Paul Duren	6-1	240	So.
	Jon Cruz	6-5	350	Fr.		Patrice McGee	6-1	230	So.
RT	Kellen Davis	6-5	280	So.	MLB	Lawrence Pinson	6-2	245	So.
	Doug Koenig	6-4	295	Sr.		Glenn Jackson	6-1	220	Fr.
TE	Billy Bajema	6-5	255	Jr.	LCB	Darrell Williams	5-9	175	Jr.
	Charlie Johnson	6-4	280	So.		Andre Johnson	5-10	190	So.
WR	D'Juan Woods	6-2	200	Fr.	SS	Vernon Grant	5-10	185	So.
	John Wohlgemuth	6-2	190	Jr.		Fath' Carter	6-3	220	Sr.
QB	Josh Fields	6-1	210	Jr.	FS	Thomas Wright	5-11	185	So.
	Jamie Beeghley	6-3	195	Fr.		Chase Holland	6-0	205	So.
TB	Tatum Bell	5-11	205	Sr.	WS	Elbert Craig	6-1	210	Sr.
	Seymore Shaw	6-0	225	So.		Jamar Ransom	5-11	210	So.
FB	Tim Burrough	6-1	245	Sr.	RCB	Robert Jones	6-0	190	So.
	Shawn Willis	6-1	235	So.		Daniel McLemore	5-7	160	So.
PK	Luke Phillips	6-0	170	Sr.	P	Cole Fardan	5-11	210	Jr.

Players with starting experience in bold

TEXAS A&M AGGIES

In April, when new Texas A&M Athletic Director Bill Byrne announced increased football season ticket prices, new Coach Dennis Franchione — concerned that higher costs would produce higher expectations — immediately stopped by Byrne's office.

"I told Bill, 'You could have given me a little time to prove myself before raising ticket costs,'" Franchione jokingly recalled with a smile. "Bill said, 'Coach, you have time. You have all the way until Aug. 30 (when the Aggies open the season).'"

All jokes aside, Franchione already has been a big expectations inducer with A&M fans. Based on virtually everything that has happened since Dec. 6, 2002 — the day Byrne officially introduced Franchione as head coach — the excitement level among Aggies is approaching "never-before-seen" levels.

Season ticket sales are up. Donations to the 12th Man Foundation, the athletic fundraising organization of A&M athletics, are reaching record-setting numbers. And more than 41,000 fans attended the April 12 spring game.

In 2002, A&M attracted fewer than 5,000 fans for the final spring game under R.C. Slocum.

It's enough to make some A&M fans forget about the struggles of the program the new coach inherits. Franchione may indeed prove to be a national championship caliber coach. He has proven he is capable of turning programs around, as he did at New Mexico, TCU and Alabama.

But the 2003 Aggies are probably not yet at championship level — whether it's national, conference or Big 12 South Division. Since winning the 1998 Big 12 title, the Aggies have gone 29-19 overall. During that span, A&M went 3-13 against Big 12 rivals Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, Colorado and Texas Tech.

Mediocrity reached its peak last season when the Aggies stumbled to a 6-6 record, went 3-4 at Kyle Field, fell to fifth in the Big 12 South standings and failed to earn a

bowl bid.

Franchione's arrival, along with his impressive first recruiting class, has brought a new level of hope to A&M. But with a brutal road schedule and a number of holes to fill, especially on defense, Franchione realizes the revival of the Aggies may not be an overnight process.

"We want to win as many games as we can," Franchione said regarding his first-year goals. "We want to be exciting and grow this enthusiasm—foster it, nurture it to even greater heights. But there's a fine line between enthusiasm and reality.

"I do notice the last three years we have gone 7-5, 8-4, 6-6. Fans sometimes fail to remember that, so I give them some 'Fran reminders.' But (A&M) was very competitive in games last year, so hopefully, we can make a difference and get over the hump."

Franchione will certainly have his team conditioned to get over the hump in the fourth quarter. His offseason conditioning programs and spring practices were noticeably more intense than what A&M was accustomed to under Slocum.

"He's (in the weight room) all the time, encouraging us and demanding more of us," linebacker Randall Webb said of Franchione. "You can tell he's a players' coach. He puts some fear in you, but you want to go the extra mile for him. Everything we've done since he's gotten here has been five

times more intense than what we were doing."

A better conditioned A&M team may be better prepared to finish games in 2003. A&M lost five games last season that were decided in either the fourth quarter or overtime.

But conditioning and coaching can only take a team so far. The bottom line is the Aggies are, for the most part, extremely young overall and quite inexperienced on defense. Furthermore, the Aggies must play Virginia Tech, Texas Tech, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Missouri on the road this year. A&M was 1-4 last year against those teams at home.

Texas A&M Sports Information



Junior tailback Derek Farmer was A&M's leading rusher with 739 yards and seven touchdowns.

Despite the obstacles in their path, the Aggies expect to be better in 2003. And they certainly expect to be back in the bowl picture.

That's definitely a possibility with the number of play-makers A&M can put on the field offensively. The Aggies' hopes for immediate improvement rest largely in a passing game that could be extraordinary.

Last season, Dustin Long matched the school record with 19 touchdown passes and finished second among A&M's all-time single-season passing leaders with 2,509 yards. And Long didn't even begin the season as the Aggies' starting quarterback.

What's more, he's probably not the leading candidate to emerge as A&M's starting quarterback this year. Perhaps the player with the most potential on the A&M roster is sophomore quarterback Reggie McNeal, who engineered the Aggies' stunning upset last season over No. 1 Oklahoma.

The fleet-footed, strong-armed McNeal didn't display consistency as a true freshman, but he certainly proved to have a flair for the dramatics. With a little more seasoning, McNeal could be sensational.

He will also have a tremendous cast of play-makers at his disposal. Wide receivers Terrence Murphy, Jamaar Taylor, Terrence Thomas, Tydrick Riley, Anthony Wright and John Roberson form a deep and most explosive receiving corps.

A&M's running game has failed to average better than 3.8 yards per carry for five straight seasons. But the ground attack may have received a significant boost this spring.

Derek Farmer, the leading rusher last season with 739 yards, returns as the starter. But he will be pressed by red-shirt freshman Courtney Lewis, who had an outstanding spring.

And possibly the biggest find of the spring was Jason Carter, who moved from third-team quarterback to "A back." In that role, the elusive Carter will run the ball and catch passes out of the backfield. Carter was the star of the spring game, producing 181 all-purpose yards.

The A&M defense, on the other hand, may not be as promising. The Aggies must replace starters like Ty Warren, Terrence Kiel, Sammy Davis, Brian Gamble and Jarrod Penright.

In addition, the Aggies are moving from the 3-4 alignment to the 4-3, creating some significant concerns regarding depth along the defensive line. With so many holes to plug on defense, the Aggies may be in for some high-scoring affairs this year.

"We'll do whatever it takes," Carter said. "We have some concerns, but I guarantee you we will be better. We'll surprise some folks this year who may overlook us. With so many weapons on offense, we'll give our fans their money's worth."

A&M fans will happily pay more for season tickets to see just that. ■ — *By Rusty Burson*



Texas A&M Sports Information

Linebacker Jared Morris finished with 73 tackles, including five sacks.



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

4th

SOUTH DIVISION

STRENGTHS

Led by **Reggie McNeal**, the Aggies have an extremely impressive collection of skill players. Receivers **Terrence Murphy** and **Jamaar Taylor** headline an outstanding receiving corps, while **Courtney Lewis**, **Jason Carter** and **Derek Farmer** are threats to make big plays in the backfield.

QUESTION MARKS

Depth is a major concern, especially along the defensive line. The depth on the offensive front isn't where it needs to be, either. And for the first time in recent memory, there isn't much proven star potential in the secondary or at the linebacker spots.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Quarterback McNeal appears to be the versatile weapon the Aggies have longed for under center for many years. Last November, against No. 1 Oklahoma, McNeal came off the bench to throw four touchdown passes, rush for 89 yards and lead the Aggies to a stunning win. If he can consistently do things like that, A&M could make a run at the South crown.

NEW FACILITIES

Texas A&M will open its \$25 million south end zone football complex and academic center this fall. The complex will house an academic center for student-athletes, coaches offices, locker rooms, training rooms, meeting rooms and a players' lounge.

LESS SUCCESS

In the 1990s, A&M won four conference titles (three Southwest, one Big 12) and had an overall conference record of 60-14-2. The new millennium has been much less kind to the Aggies, who are 12-12 in conference games since 2000.

2002 RECORD: 6-6 CONFERENCE FINISH: 3-5

A 31	UL Lafayette	W, 31-7
S 7	@ Pittsburgh	W, 14-12
S 21	Virginia Tech	L, 13-3
S 28	Louisiana Tech	W, 31-3
O 5	Texas Tech	L, 48-47 (ot)
O 12	@ Baylor	W, 41-0
O 19	@ Kansas	W, 47-22
O 26	Nebraska	L, 38-31
N 2	@ Oklahoma St.	L, 28-23
N 9	Oklahoma	W, 30-26
N 16	Missouri	L, 33-27 (2 ot)
N 29	@ Texas	L, 50-20

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	Terrence Murphy	6-1	191	Jr.	DE	David Ross	6-2	268	Fr.
	Anthony Wright	6-2	207	So.		Brandon Johnson	6-1	244	Jr.
ST	Alan Reuber	6-7	310	Sr.	DT	Johnny Jolly	6-3	287	So.
	Alex Kotzur	6-4	284	Fr.		Marques Thornton	6-1	274	Fr.
SG	Aldo De La Garza	6-3	317	So.	DT	Brian Patrick	6-5	293	So.
	Quentin Holman	6-1	327	So.		Julian Parks	6-1	356	Fr.
C	Geoff Hangartner	6-5	300	Jr.	DE	Linnis Smith	6-4	288	Sr.
	James Milkavich	6-2	274	So.		Lawrence Hooper	6-4	281	So.
QG	John Kirk	6-4	295	Sr.	SLB	Archie McDaniel	6-1	227	So.
	Andre Brooks	6-4	304	Sr.		Blake Kendrick	6-1	217	Jr.
OT	Jami Hightower	6-4	327	Jr.	MLB	Jared Morris	6-3	256	Sr.
	Dominique Steamer	6-4	313	So.		Scott Stickane	6-0	234	Sr.
TE	Ryan White	6-4	239	So.	ROV	Nurahda Manning	6-2	230	So.
or	Taylor Schuster	6-5	260	Fr.		Randall Webb	6-3	224	Jr.
QB	Dustin Long	6-3	205	Jr.	LCB	Sean Weston	5-10	180	So.
or	Reggie McNeal	6-2	191	So.		Ronald Jones	5-10	179	So.
TB	Derek Farmer	5-11	202	Jr.	RCB	Byron Jones	5-10	178	Jr.
	Courtney Lewis	5-10	187	Fr.		Bryant Singleton	5-11	187	So.
FB	Keith Joseph	6-2	241	Jr.	SS	Keelan Jackson	6-1	219	Jr.
	Thomas Perry	6-1	234	Sr.		Anthony Squillante	6-0	207	Jr.
FL	Tim Van Zant	6-1	195	Sr.	FS	Jaxson Appel	5-10	196	So.
	Jamaar Taylor	6-1	194	Sr.		Kevin Mangum	5-11	191	Jr.
PK	Todd Pegram	5-11	190	So.	P	Cody Scates	6-0	182	Jr.

Players with starting experience in bold

TEXAS TECH RED RAIDERS

The Red Raiders came into last season with the goal of challenging for the Big 12 title, and that is exactly what they did. A dramatic 42-38 victory over third-ranked Texas gained the Red Raiders bragging rights in the state and an opportunity to knock off Oklahoma and bull their way into the conference championship game.

While Texas Tech was thwarted in the regular season finale against the Sooners, the Red Raiders proved that they could play with the big boys of the Big 12. The question now is whether or not they can move on without record-setting quarterback Kliff Kingsbury, who concluded his career with 17 NCAA records and became only the third quarterback in NCAA history to pass for more than 5,000 yards in a single season.

Fortunately for Texas Tech fans, Mike Leach is still the head coach, which means his all-pass, all-the-time offense is back. His new triggerman is B.J. Symons, a senior who gets his first shot to start after serving as Kingsbury's understudy for the last three seasons. Symons knows that it will be difficult to duplicate Kingsbury's success, but he is anxious to step in and give it a shot.

"I feel like it is my job as the quarterback to take charge of the offense and be a leader," Symons said. "I don't care if people expect me to throw for 5,000 yards. Whether I throw for 5,000 or 2,000 yards, it doesn't matter as long as we win."

If Symons struggles or misses any action due to injury, the Red Raider coaching staff feels that it is in good hands with backup Sonny Cumbie. The strong-armed junior, who completed 5-of-6 passes in two games last season, has Kingsbury-like size at 6-foot-4, 210 pounds.

Fortunately for the Red Raider offense, the transition to a new quarterback might not be too difficult as five players

that caught at least 50 passes last season are returning. Leach's offense may not focus on the run, but there is no question that running back is a pivotal position in the scheme. Case in point: sophomore Taurean Henderson, last season's team leader with 793 yards on the ground, finished second in the Big 12 with 98 receptions. He is an elusive runner that is dangerous in the open field — just ask the Texas Longhorns, who last season were burned on

a 25-yard touchdown reception by Henderson that put the game away for Texas Tech.

Last year's second leading receiver for the Red Raiders was Wes Welker, another running back that — oh, by the way — led the team with 1,054 receiving yards. A senior, Welker scored three touchdowns on punt returns and is arguably the most exciting player in the Big 12. He and Henderson will keep opposing defensive coordinators up at night as they try to figure out how to stop a duo that combined for more than 3,500 all-purpose yards in 2002.

Those two aren't the only horses in the Tech stable. The Red Raiders still have receivers Mickey Peters, Nehemiah Glover and Carlos Francis — all returning starters that accounted for a season average of 55 catches and 684 yards. While Peters uses his size to take advantage of smaller defensive backs, Glover and

Francis are speed merchants that Symons will look to when the Red Raiders need a game-breaking play. While the offense should continue to click, the concerns lie on the defensive side of the ball, where Texas Tech must replace six starters including defensive end Aaron Hunt, the Big 12's all-time sack leader.

In addition to Hunt, the Red Raiders also lost linebacker Lawrence Flugence. All Flugence did is lead the nation in tackles in each of the last two seasons, establish-

Texas Tech Sports Information



Versatile Wes Welker had 86 catches for 1,054 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior. He also returned three punts for touchdowns to give him six in his career.

ing an NCAA record with 193 stops a year ago.

As if the loss of Hunt and Flugence isn't damaging enough, Leach must also find two new cornerbacks to replace Joselio Hanson and Ricky Sailor.

Helping Leach fill all of these holes is new defensive coordinator Lyle Setencich, who has the task of bolstering a defense that last season ranked ninth overall in the Big 12. Setencich comes to Texas Tech from California, where in a span of three seasons following his arrival, went from worst to first in total defense in the Pac-10. He will have his hands full trying to do the same with the Red Raider defense, which spends a lot of time on the field thanks to the quick-strike capability of the offense.

Setencich will look to a mix of young players and junior college transfers to step in and produce. Redshirt freshmen Chris Hudler and Ken Scott will get chances to play early and often along the defensive line, joining junior Adell Duckett and sophomore Fred Threweatt, who is poised for a breakout season at defensive tackle. One player to keep an eye on is redshirt freshman Seth Nitschmann, who was impressive in spring drills and could supplant sophomore Randall Cherry as a starter at one defensive end position.



Texas Tech Sports Information

Sophomore Taurean Henderson was Tech's leading rusher with 793 yards. He added 98 catches for 633 yards.

He is also the only proven veteran among the Texas Tech defensive backs. Sophomore free safety Vincent Meeks made a smooth transition from running back, where he played four games in 2002 before moving to defense. Meeks proved to be a fast learner as he intercepted three passes, including two in the Red Raiders' blowout win over Clemson in the Tangerine Bowl.

Another freshman who staged his coming-out party in the Tangerine Bowl is linebacker Jay Saldi, who registered five tackles, a sack, an interception and four pass breakups. He and junior Mike Smith lead a young, but talented group of linebackers.

There is no doubt that Leach will need some strong performances to replace record-setters such as Kingsbury, Flugence and Hunt, but he also will need someone to take over for kicker Robert Treece, one of the Big 12's most consistent performers from a season ago. Treece finished his career a perfect 93-of-93 on extra points and hit 70 percent of his field goal attempts beyond 40 yards last season.

Leach has worked hard to make sure that Texas Tech becomes one of the Big 12's most dangerous teams, but if he can keep the program pointed in the right direction despite the loss of many key players, he and the Red Raiders will also finally have what they deserve. Respect. ■ — *By Shawn Heilbron*



AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

STRENGTHS

Take your pick among the offensive skill players. **Taurean Henderson** could blossom into one of the Big 12's premier runners while **Wes Welker** is arguably the nation's most versatile player. A deep receiving corps will help the transition from **Kliff Kingsbury** to **B.J. Symons**.

QUESTION MARKS

The defensive front will be hard pressed to find someone to replace the production of **Aaron Hunt**. Tech's unproven corners will be tested early, and the Red Raiders still don't have a kicker, which could be trouble in close games early in the season.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Welker has been named a third-team preseason All-American as a punt returner. Welker set an NCAA record with 57 punt returns in 2002 and has returned six punts for touchdowns in his career.

INSTANT IMPACT

Texas Tech signed two cornerbacks among the eight junior college transfers added this year. One player who could step in immediately and start is **Jamaal Jackson**, a tough cover corner who was the junior college player of the year in 2002. In addition to Jackson, the Red Raiders brought in the speedy **Jabari Smith**.

TOGETHER AGAIN

New defensive coordinator **Lyle Setencich**, who comes to Lubbock from California, begins his second tour of duty with **Mike Leach**. While the head coach at Cal Poly SLO in 1987, Setencich hired Leach as his offensive line coach and gave the current Red Raider head coach his first collegiate coaching position.

5th
**SOUTH
DIVISION**

2002 RECORD: 9-5

CONFERENCE FINISH: 5-3

A 24	# @ Ohio State	L, 45-21
S 7	@ SMU	W, 24-14
S 14	Mississippi	W, 42-28
S 21	N.C. State	L, 51-48 (ot)
S 27	@ New Mexico	W, 49-0
O 5	@ Texas A&M	W, 48-47 (ot)
O 12	@ Iowa State	L, 31-17
O 19	Missouri	W, 52-38
O 26	@ Colorado	L, 37-13
N 2	Baylor	W, 62-11
N 9	Oklahoma State	W, 49-24
N 16	Texas	W, 42-38
N 23	@ Oklahoma	L, 60-15
D 23	@ Clemson	W, 55-15

#NACDA Pigskin Classic & Tangerine Bowl, Orlando, Fla.

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

XR	Nehemiah Glover	5-8 174 Jr.	LE	Seth Nitschmann	6-3 250 Fr.
	Cody Fuller	6-0 189 So.		Randall Cherry	6-3 262 So.
LT	Daniel Loper	6-7 325 Jr.	NT	Chris Hudler	6-2 296 Fr.
	Michael Bailey	5-6 296 So.		Fred Threweatt	6-3 333 So.
LG	Cody Campbell	6-4 315 Jr.	DT	Ken Scott	6-2 295 Fr.
	Glenn January	6-6 288 Fr.		P. Majondo-Mwamba	6-3 290 Jr.
C	Toby Cecil	6-4 290 Sr.	RE	Adell Duckett	6-4 261 Jr.
	Dylan Gandy	6-3 294 Jr.		Marquis Turner	6-0 230 Jr.
RG	Manuel Ramirez	6-3 310 Fr.	SLB	Mike Smith	6-2 235 Jr.
	Brandon Jones	6-3 295 Fr.		Jeremy Woods	6-1 238 Jr.
RT	Casey Keck	6-4 310 Sr.	MLB	Brook Stratton	5-11 225 Fr.
	E.J. Whitley	6-6 305 So.		Fletcher Session	6-0 212 Fr.
YR	Mickey Peters	6-3 211 Sr.	WLB	John Saldi	6-5 215 So.
	Gabe Hall	6-4 270 Fr.		Brent Slaughter	6-0 200 Fr.
ZR	Carlos Francis	5-10 197 Sr.	LCB	Ivory McCann	5-8 176 Jr.
	Trev Haverty	6-0 200 Jr.		Jamaal Jackson	5-11 175 Jr.
QB	B.J. Symons	6-2 215 Sr.	SS	Ryan Aycock	6-0 208 Sr.
	Sonny Cumble	6-4 210 Jr.		Mitch Sweats	6-0 196 Fr.
FB	Taurean Henderson	5-10 190 So.	FS	Vincent Meeks	5-11 187 So.
	Johnnie Mack	5-7 178 Jr.		Byron Johnson	6-0 202 Sr.
HB	Wes Welker	5-9 190 Sr.	RCB	Marcus Boyd	6-0 198 Sr.
	Clay McGuire	6-2 228 Jr.		SirDon Lewis	5-9 160 So.
PK	Ryan Bishop	5-8 195 Jr.	P	Mitch Brenner	5-11 222 Jr.

Players with starting experience in bold

BAYLOR BEARS

Next! A new passenger has stepped aboard the ever-revolving coaching carousel at Baylor. Much like his predecessor, Kevin Steele, he comes with impressive coaching credentials and an infinite supply of energy and confidence.

Can Guy Morriss be the one to finally turn a moribund Baylor program into a contender in the Big 12? Baylor fans are banking on it, along with hopes that the Bears' search for respectability — not to mention victories — won't last long.

The decision by Morriss to depart Kentucky after just two seasons at the helm may have seemed curious to some. After all, he had been associated with the program since 1997 and was instrumental in establishing Kentucky as one of the most explosive offensive teams in the nation. Morriss also helped right the ship after inheriting the job on the eve of national signing day in 2001 with the future of the program clouded in the thick uncertainty of certain NCAA probation.

A season ago, he guided the Wildcats to a 7-5 record and quickly had the program pointed in the right direction.

Then Baylor came calling. For the Texas native, the lure of the Lone Star State proved too difficult to pass up.

"It was an opportunity to come home and be closer to my family," Morriss said.

"To return to Texas and compete in an extremely competitive conference at a university with the academic tradition that Baylor has, we think that is very unique and should be a strong selling point as far as our recruiting."

At Kentucky, Morriss developed a reputation as a strong recruiter, developing rapport with high school coaches and players alike. In order to rebuild a Baylor program that hasn't experienced a winning season in almost 10 years, Morriss will need to quickly build a network with the state's prep coaches that will lead to more blue-chip players to wear Baylor green and gold.

"Obviously high school coaches are probably the most important link in funneling kids to us," he said. "We've opened our doors to Texas high school coaches, and anytime we can have them on our campus is a plus for us."

Doors aren't the only things Morriss has opened at Baylor. The offense will be opened up as well, which should bring some much-needed excitement to a unit that tallied a shade under 17 points per contest, the lowest scoring average in the Big 12. Baylor fans might not have to wait long

for a turnaround if Morriss can duplicate what he and his staff accomplished at Kentucky.

The year prior to Morriss' arrival at Kentucky, the Wildcats finished 109th nationally in total offense. Five out of the next six seasons during Morriss' tenure, Kentucky ranked in the nation's top 20 in passing offense. The fact that the Wildcats had Tim Couch to run the offense during Morriss' early tenure in Lexington certainly didn't hurt. While Baylor won't have a player of Couch's caliber calling the signals, the Bears finally appear to have some stability at the quarterback position.

Junior Aaron Karas started 10 games in 2002 and completed 59.8 percent of his passes to establish a school record. Karas will be backed up by Davon Vinson, a sophomore with prototypical size (6-foot-4, 225 pounds) who was redshirted last season after playing in six

Baylor Sports Information



Quarterback Aaron Karas set a school record by completing 59.8 percent of his passes as a sophomore.

games in 2001.

One player Morriss would have loved to have his quarterbacks throwing to is Baylor career receiving leader Reggie Newhouse, who exhausted his eligibility last season. Without Newhouse in the fold, senior speedster Robert Quiroga becomes the go-to receiver after grabbing 49 passes a year ago. He should get plenty of opportunities if Karas gets time in the pocket, a luxury not afforded Baylor passers a year ago. The Bears yielded a Big 12-worst 52 sacks and will have to replace three starters on the offensive

line. This is an area that must improve or Morriss might be forced to alter his offensive philosophy in the short term.

"In an ideal world, I'd like to throw the ball about 60 percent and run it 40," he said. "That particular balance is what I'm striving for."

Morriss will rely on the legs of senior tailback Rashad Armstrong to find some holes and buy some breathing room for Karas and the passing game. Armstrong, who sat out spring practice to tend to his academics, led the Bears with 647 yards on the ground while splitting time with fellow senior Jonathan Golden, who scored a team-high eight touchdowns. Both players will see extensive action early in the season as Morriss looks for one of the two to take charge in Baylor's single-back formations.

While some questions remain on offense, there is great concern along the defensive line, which lost three starters who were among Baylor's top four tacklers last season. Senior defensive end Dominick Cravens is the lone holdover among the front four, but the other book-end on the line, junior Khari Long, showed immense promise last season when he led the team in sacks. Another player to keep an eye on is sophomore Montez Murphy, who could push for a starting spot after turning heads in the spring. The issues lie with the interior, which will feature inexperienced tackles Luke Groth and Michael Gary, a redshirt freshman who will see his first live action this fall. In an effort to add depth, Baylor offered a scholarship to M.T. Robinson, a junior college transfer, following spring drills.



Baylor Sports Information

Linebacker John Garrett spent the spring recovering from a knee injury, which limited him to six games in 2002.

Baylor is relatively solid at linebacker, where senior John Garrett will be the leader in the new 5-2 scheme. Although he spent the spring nursing a knee injury that limited him to just six games in 2002, Garrett should be able to return to the form that led to his being named to the preseason Butkus Award watch list as a junior.

The unquestioned leader in the secondary is senior outside safety Derrick Cash, a tremendous run stopper who will be the key cog in the 5-2 defense. Cash led the Bears with 50 solo tackles a year ago and should thrive playing close to the line of scrimmage. At cornerback, the Bears will look to junior Tyson Hampton to replace the departed Bobby Hart, Baylor's interception leader last season.

Morriss knows that he will need players such as Hampton to play above expectation this season in order for the Bears to make their presence known in the Big 12 South this season. It is no surprise, however, that Morriss has high expectations for his team despite the recent history of futility in Waco.

"We're going to demand high effort," Morriss said. "I believe that we can win here at Baylor, and (the players) are going to have to be committed to that." ■

— By Shawn Heilbron

AT A GLANCE

PROJECTED 2003 FINISH:

6th SOUTH DIVISION

STRENGTHS

A new leader brings a new attitude. **Guy Morriss** will expect nothing short of maximum effort, and with high-impact players such as **Derrick Cash** and **Khari Long** on defense, Baylor could be surprisingly effective against the run.

QUESTION MARKS

Heading into the fall, the Achilles' heel of this team is the defensive line. The secondary also lacks a proven playmaker outside of Cash.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Senior outside safety Cash is at his best against the run. Last season, he led the Bears with 50 solo tackles and also had two interceptions, one which he returned 60 yards for a touchdown. He has seven career interceptions.

GETTING THEIR KICKS

Baylor attempted a league-low 10 field goals last season, converting seven. With a new offense designed to move the ball down the field there should be more opportunities to kick field goals. That could be adventurous as the Bears are counting on true freshman **Ryan Havens** to handle the kicking chores. "We may be going for two a lot," Morriss said.

KARAS-MATIC QUARTERBACK

Aaron Karas finished second to Texas Tech's **Kliff Kingsbury** in completion percentage among Big 12 quarterbacks. With a pass-happy offense that quarterbacks dream of, Karas has an opportunity to parlay his accuracy into some gaudy statistics as long as he can keep his mistakes to a minimum while he grasps the new scheme.

2002 RECORD: 3-9 CONFERENCE FINISH: 1-7

A 31	@ California	L, 70-22
S 7	Samford	W, 50-12
S 14	@ New Mexico	L, 23-0
S 21	Tulsa	W, 37-25
O 5	Kansas	W, 35-32
O 12	Texas A&M	L, 41-0
O 19	@ Colorado	L, 34-0
O 26	Kansas State	L, 44-10
N 2	@ Texas Tech	L, 62-11
N 9	@ Texas	L, 41-0
N 16	Oklahoma	L, 49-9
N 23	@ Oklahoma St.	L, 63-28

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

XWR Robert Quiroga	6-3 188 Sr.	E	Dominick Cravens	6-3 240 Sr.
J Fields	6-3 201 So.		Joe Simmons	6-5 254 Sr.
LT Quintin Outland	6-5 333 Jr.	T	Michael Gary	6-3 296 Fr.
Brad Schlueter	6-4 277 Jr.		Ian Bracken	6-1 230 Fr.
LG Akeem Rettig	6-6 362 Fr.	T	Lorenzo Davis	6-4 312 So.
Gavin McKinley	6-5 262 Fr.		Luke Groth	6-5 266 Jr.
C Cedric Fields	6-4 278 Sr.	E	Khari Long	6-4 254 Jr.
Joe DeWoody	6-4 284 Jr.		Montez Murphy	6-5 257 So.
RG Joe DeWoody	6-4 284 Jr.	OS	Derrick Cash	6-0 216 Sr.
Travis Farst	6-7 307 Fr.		Maurice Linqvist	5-11 202 Fr.
RT Lequan McDonald	6-5 352 So.	LB	Stephen Sepulveda	6-2 224 Sr.
Glen Oskin	6-5 303 So.		Colin Allred	6-2 237 So.
TE Shane Williams	6-4 226 Sr.	LB	John Garrett	6-2 253 Sr.
Billy Crawford	6-2 235 Jr.		Justin Crooks	6-0 230 Jr.
QB Aaron Karas	6-2 199 Jr.	OS	Willie Andrews	5-10 186 So.
Davon Vinson	6-4 222 So.		Larry Bynum	5-11 191 Sr.
TB Rashad Armstrong	5-8 198 Sr.	CB	Tyson Hampton	6-0 193 Jr.
Jonathan Golden	6-1 210 Sr.		Anthony Arline	6-2 186 Fr.
FB Jonathan Evans	6-1 253 Jr.	FS	Maurice Lane	5-11 183 So.
Jonathan Sisk	5-11 221 Fr.		Danielle McLean	6-0 202 Sr.
ZWR Marques Roberts	6-2 225 Jr.	CB	Matt Johnson	5-10 173 Sr.
Baylor Barbee	6-5 210 Jr.		Ahmad Rhodes	5-9 170 Sr.
PK Tony Wall	6-1 199 Fr.	P	Jeremy Parker	5-9 162 So.

Players with starting experience in bold

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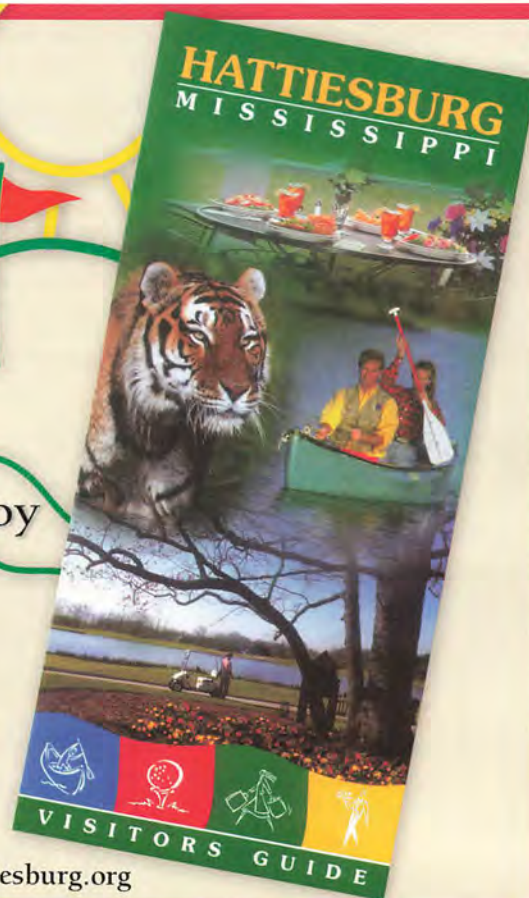
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NONCONFERENCE OPPONENTS



Legendary Penn State Coach Joe Paterno meets with Nebraska's Frank Solich before last year's game at Beaver Stadium. Paterno enters his 38th season with a record of 336-100-3. He passed Bear Bryant to become No. 1 on the all-time victory list in 2001. Nebraska and Penn State meet Sept. 13 in Lincoln, the second of four nonconference games on the 2003 schedule. The Huskers play host to Utah State Sept. 6 and Troy State Oct. 4 and travel to Hattiesburg, Miss., to face Southern Mississippi in a Thursday night ESPN game on Sept. 25.

Nebraska vs. Penn State

Penn State leads series, 7-5

- 1920** — Penn State 20, Nebraska 0 (University Park)
- 1949** — Penn State 22, Nebraska 7 (University Park)
- 1950** — Nebraska 19, Penn State 0 (Lincoln)
- 1951** — Penn State 15, Nebraska 7 (Lincoln)
- 1952** — Penn State 10, Nebraska 0 (University Park)
- 1958** — Nebraska 14, Penn State 7 (Lincoln)
- 1979** — Nebraska 42, Penn State 17 (Lincoln)
- 1980** — Nebraska 21, Penn State 7 (University Park)
- 1981** — Penn State 30, Nebraska 24 (Lincoln)
- 1982** — Penn State 27, Nebraska 24 (University Park)
- 1983** — Nebraska 44, Penn State 6 (neutral*)
- 2002** — Penn State 40, Nebraska 7 (University Park)

*Kickoff Classic at East Rutherford, N.J.

UTAH STATE AGGIES

Utah State moves into a new conference this fall, must go through a difficult slate during the first month of the season, and on top of everything, needs to rely on a new quarterback with little varsity experience right off the bat.

It's exactly the type of scenario that could cause many sleepless nights for most college football coaches during the summer months.

The above situation is what faces Aggies Coach Mick Dennehy, and then some. Not only will Utah State plug in a new signal-caller as it joins the Sun Belt Conference, and go up against the likes of Utah, Nebraska, Arizona State and New Mexico before league play begins, but also that quarterback will replace Jose Fuentes, who left after rewriting much of the school record book.

Last year alone, Fuentes threw for 3,268 yards, and he finished his career with more than 9,000 yards. With Fuentes running the show, the Aggies had the seventh best passing team in the country, averaging a little more than 300 yards per game. As a team, Utah State recorded 300 or more yards six times in 11 games.

Depleting the quarterback stable even more, backup Jeff Crosbie also left because of graduation. Crosbie was the Aggies' starter in 1998 and 1999 before Fuentes beat him out.

What's left is Travis Cox, who has attempted exactly nine passes as a college quarterback. Incidentally, he has completed five for a grand total of 11 yards. One of Cox's passes, and completions, came in a 44-13 loss to Nebraska.

If Dennehy is worried, he isn't saying.

In fact, after watching Cox run the first team offense during spring practice, the junior from Hyrum, Utah, established himself as the top gun heading into fall camp.

And Dennehy is OK with that.

"He's our No. 1 guy — without question," Dennehy

told the Salt Lake City Desert News. "And I think it's obvious to everyone that's been around in terms of the program, even though he doesn't have a lot of game experience.

"I'm really, really pleased with Travis Cox and where he's at, and his emergence as a leader."

What's more, Cox must throw to a group of receivers who have limited Division I experience. Gone are Kevin Curtis and Gary Coleman, the team's top two pass catch-

ers a year ago. The two combined for 109 receptions and more than 1,800 yards.

But don't feel too sorry for the Aggies. They just reloaded.

Dennehy brought in junior college transfers Raymond Hicks and Barry Tolli to go along with holdover Chris Stallworth, who caught 17 passes for 231 yards as the Aggies' third downfield option in 2002.

Hicks played at Coffeyville (Kan.) Community College, where he earned second-team all-conference honors after an 18-catch season. Tolli ended his junior college career at Moorpark (Calif.) Community College with four catches for 186 yards and three touchdowns in the Potato Bowl. He played professional baseball for four seasons before he decided to give football a shot.

"We have questions in our wide receiver corp, but I feel really good with the group we have," Dennehy said. "Barry Tolli and Raymond Hicks should step in nicely, but we need some other guys to step up. We need Chris Stallworth to put the finishing touches on what has been a good career."

Fullback Chris Cooley basically lines up as a tight end in Utah State's offense, and he caught 31 passes for more than 500 yards last season.

The Aggies are also untested at running back. Last year's leading rusher, James Samuel, transferred to Weber

Utah State Sports Information



Linebacker Robert Watts was Utah State's No. 2 tackler with 85. He had 8.5 tackles for losses and two sacks.

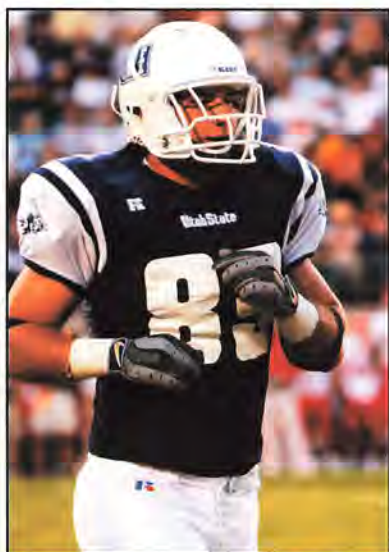
State, which leaves Utah State with two players with limited experience battling for playing time.

David Fiefia and Richard Watson head into fall camp as the top two backs. Watson rushed for 260 yards last season while Fiefia had just 12 carries and gained 29 yards.

Fiefia, however, had a good spring camp and caught the eye of Dennehy.

"I am pleased with the running backs," he said. "We have run the ball, and they have played and looked better than they ever have, particularly Dave Fiefia. Being a senior, you can tell he is really hungry and that his last season is going to be real important to him. He has been a great leader on the field, and he has done some nice things for us."

Up front, the Aggies return three starters, including



Utah State Sports Information

Fullback/tight end Chris Cooley caught 31 passes for 502 yards

right guard Trevor Hutton, named the team's top lineman last season. He'll be joined by center Aric Galliano and tackle Donald Penn.

Utah State will have a new look defensively, as first-year coordinator David Kotulski switched from a 4-3 set to a 3-4 alignment this spring.

At least the Aggies have seven returning starters to build the new-look defense around. The best may be linebacker Robert Watts, who was in on 85 tackles last season, the second most on the team.

"It's different, but it's not," Dennehy said of the

switch. "The body types that we have recruited the last two years don't exactly fit. The first half of the spring was personnel evaluation and getting the kids in the right positions."

Up front, three starters return in ends John Chick and Justin Jackson and tackles Ronald Tupea. Chick had four sacks during his freshman season, Jackson is a solid player, and Tupea can plug up the middle.

Watts and Rodney Wilson lead a talented group of linebackers, although Utah State must find a replacement for Jesse Busta, the third leading tackler in school history. Watts could help shoulder some of the load, while Wilson is a two-year starter and is coming off a 47-tackle season.

The secondary will be led by two returning starters in cornerback Mark Estelle, who broke up 13 passes last season, and safety Derrek Shank. Shank was in on 65 tackles.

This position should be strong for the Aggies. Nine lettermen return to the secondary, and Bryan Jackson should slip into a bigger role after serving as the nickel back last season. Jerome Dennis, who gained valuable experience last season, moves into the starting lineup at the other cornerback spot. His highlight was returning an interception 75 yards for a touchdown on the last play of the first half that gave Utah State a 34-7 lead against Brigham Young. The Aggies then surrendered 28 unanswered points in the second half and lost 35-34. ■ — *By Mark Derowitsch*

AT A GLANCE

AFFILIATION: Sun Belt Conference.

PLAYS NEBRASKA: Sept. 6 in Lincoln.

STRENGTHS

The Aggies have a strong passing attack regardless of who the quarterback is. This team is known for throwing the football. Their linebackers, led by **Robert Watts**, are a solid unit.

QUESTION MARKS

Utah State has switched to a 3-4 defensive alignment and doesn't have the right personnel yet. At times, the Aggies have struggled to establish a running game.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Watts was named the team's top linebacker and most outstanding sophomore. He finished second in tackles, tied for the team lead in tackles for loss and was third in sacks.

CONFERENCE TIES

Utah State, which spent the past two seasons as a Division I Independent, joins the Sun Belt Conference this fall. The Aggies had been members of the Big West Conference, which stopped sponsoring the sport after the 2000 season. The Sun Belt is made up of Arkansas State, Idaho, Louisiana-Lafayette, Louisiana-Monroe, Middle Tennessee, New Mexico State, North Texas and the Aggies.

Because of a scheduling conflict, Utah State will not play league member Louisiana-Lafayette this season. Instead, the Aggies' game against Troy State will count as a Sun Belt Conference game.

2002 RECORD: 4-7 INDEPENDENT

A 28	@ Utah	L, 23-3
S 7	@ Nebraska	L, 44-13
S 14	Idaho State	W, 38-33
S 21	@ Iowa	L, 48-7
S 28	@ Boise State	L, 63-38
O 4	BYU	L, 35-34
O 19	New Mexico	W, 45-44 (ot)
O 26	@ La. Monroe	L, 51-48
N 9	New Mexico St.	W, 32-30
N 16	@ Troy State	W, 19-16 (ot)
N 30	@ Middle Tennessee	L, 45-28

CLOSE CALLS

Utah State played five straight games that were decided by three points or less in 2002. The Aggies lost to BYU by one, beat New Mexico by one in overtime, lost by three to Louisiana Monroe in two overtimes, beat New Mexico State by two points and defeated Troy State in overtime by three.

DEFENSIVE STRUGGLES

The Aggies allowed an average of 471.1 yards per game. The opponent recorded at least 400 yards in 10 games, including 500 yards four times.

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	Jerome Eason	6-3 213 So.	LT	Justin Jackson	6-3 267 Sr.
	Raymond Hicks	5-10 184 Jr.		Jeremy Guenther	6-4 270 So.
LT	Donald Penn	6-5 302 So.	NG	Ronald Tupea	6-2 293 Jr.
	Brehan Burningham	6-7 305 Jr.		Emosi Fiefia	5-11 290 Fr.
LG	Greg Vandermade	6-3 289 Sr.	RT	John Chick	6-4 242 So.
	Victor Eti	6-2 324 Jr.		Michael Gates	6-4 245 So.
C	Aric Galliano	6-3 297 Sr.	ST	Nate Putnam	6-7 239 Jr.
	Greg Vandermade	6-3 289 Sr.		Kelly Poppinga	6-2 237 Fr.
RG	Trevor Hutton	6-3 308 Sr.	MLB	Robert Watts	6-3 224 Jr.
	Malik Cin	6-4 299 So.		Matt Wiser	6-0 224 So.
RT	Elliott Tupea	6-2 313 Jr.	SLB	Rodney Wilson	6-2 215 Sr.
	Grant Calverley	6-4 296 Sr.		Jared Johnston	6-2 231 So.
TE	Patrick McNutt	6-5 255 So.	WLB	Nate Fredrick	6-3 230 So.
	Jason Stephens	6-4 220 Fr.		Ryan Taylor	6-4 220 So.
QB	Travis Cox	6-2 211 Jr.	LCB	Jerome Dennis	6-1 192 Jr.
	Matt Crivello	6-1 191 Jr.		Marvin Clark	5-10 187 Jr.
TB	David Fiefia	5-8 200 Sr.	FS	Derrek Shank	5-11 194 Sr.
	Richard Watson	5-9 208 So.		Terrance Washington	5-11 197 Fr.
FB	Chris Cooley	6-4 252 Sr.	SS	Mike Rosencrans	6-0 203 Sr.
	Trent Tate	5-9 222 Jr.		Bryan Jackson	5-11 197 Sr.
WR	Chris Stallworth	6-3 214 Sr.	RCB	Mark Estelle	5-9 175 Sr.
	Barry Toli	6-1 195 Jr.		Reggie Wilson	5-10 186 So.
PK	Ben Chaet	6-0 193 So.	P	Ben Chaet	6-0 193 So.

Players with starting experience in bold

PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

Happy Valley hasn't been all that happy the past few football seasons. Even last fall, when Penn State bounced back onto the national scene after consecutive losing seasons, there were signs that show the Nittany Lions still aren't satisfied about where their programs sits right now.

On the surface, Penn State football seemed to make a grand return. The Nittany Lions went 9-4, beat the likes of Nebraska, Virginia and Wisconsin, and earned an invitation to the Capital One Bowl, where they lost to Auburn 13-9. Penn State lost four games by a combined total of 20 points and played eventual national champion Ohio State close, losing by six points.

You'd think winning nine games would be a godsend, especially when you consider Penn State won just 10 games combined the two previous seasons.

Think again.

Joe Paterno, who has been prowling the Penn State sideline for the past 37 seasons, is more concerned about losing four games than winning nine.

"I am not happy about losing four football games," he said. "I hope we are coming in here with the idea that we can do better than that. Whether we can do better than that with the kind of people we have to play against, that is debatable, but we are going to give it a shot."

One of those teams Paterno was referring to was Nebraska, even though Penn State handed the Huskers a 40-7 setback last season in Happy Valley. A big reason why the Nittany Lions had an easy time against Nebraska was the play of quarterback Zack Mills, who threw for 259 yards on the Blackshirt defense.

Mills was challenged by Michael Robinson in the spring, but emerged with his starting job.

For now.

"Zack has been in games, winning them for us and is an

outstanding quarterback," Paterno said. "Michael has to beat him out. Michael has closed the gap, and I will say that for him because he had an outstanding spring, as has Zack."

What Paterno likes about Mills is his cool-hand approach to the game

"Zack is a tough kid to read," he said. "He doesn't show much pressure. I think he came into this thing and has had some fun this spring."

While the Huskers may have to see Mills again, they won't be running into tailback Larry Johnson.

Or, better put, they won't spend a Saturday running after Johnson.

Johnson has taken his talents to the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs. He was the first running back selected and the fourth Nittany Lion chosen with the 27th pick of the first round. Johnson rushed for 2,015 yards as a junior, tops in the Big 10, and 123 yards came against Nebraska.

"We are not going to replace a Larry Johnson," Paterno said. "You can't replace every year a kid that has been as productive as he has been. I think we have some young backs that we recruited a year ago with the idea that we were going to lose Larry. Mike Gasparanto and Pete Gilmore have a chance.

"We are certainly going to work hard to try to get somebody that can give us some of the things that

Larry could give us. I don't think we are going to get anybody that good yet."

After about three weeks of spring practice, Paterno still didn't know which back he'll turn to when the Nittany Lions kick off the 2003 season against Temple Aug. 30.

"Honest to goodness, I don't know," he said. "If I had to sit down tonight and make a decision, I would have to get a whole different mindset than I have right now because I haven't really thought about having to make



Junior Zack Mills passed for 2,417 yards and 17 touchdowns, while rushing for 201 yards and three scores. He threw for 259 yards against Nebraska.

that decision."

Penn State also graduated its top wide receiver in first-round pick Bryant Johnson, but Paterno believes Tony Johnson could pick up the slack.

Tony Johnson finished third on the team with 34 receptions a year ago, and has the ability to do even more.

"He has made a commitment to be a good, solid wide-out and a good, solid football player and whatever we have asked him to do," Paterno said. "Now he has to be a guy who wants to be the dominant guy. That is going to take a little bit more consistency in some of the things he does. He has a tendency to look like a great football player, and then he gets a little bit careless. He can't afford to get careless."

Mills will have to run the offense behind a rebuilt



Penn State Sports Information

Middle linebacker Gino Capone had 86 tackles and two sacks, despite missing the final three games with a shoulder injury.

offensive line, anchored by left guard Chris McKelvy, the lone returning starter. David Costlow moves in at center, but the rest of the spots are still up for grabs.

The Nittany Lions need to fill in some holes defensively, especially up front where tackle Jimmy Kennedy and end Michael Haynes left for the pros. Kennedy was taken with the 12th pick of the draft by St. Louis, while Chicago grabbed Haynes two spots later.

But the Lions return six starters on defense, including linebackers LaMar Stewart, Gino Capone and Derek Wake, and two members in the secondary (cornerback Rich Gardner and safety Chris Harrell).

Paterno isn't too worried about the secondary. "I think our secondary has about six kids that all have a chance to be pretty good," he said.

End John Bronson is the lone returning starter up front. While the Nittany Lions may not have the big-name players like Kennedy and Haynes, Paterno said he was impressed with the depth at that position.

"I like a lot of them" he said.

Paterno took over the Penn State program in 1966 and has no plans to step aside any time soon. He's the winningest coach in NCAA history with 336, four more than Florida State's Bobby Bowden.

His bowl record is just as impressive as the regular season mark. His Nittany Lion teams are 20-10-1 in postseason games. In 37 years, he has finished with a losing record just three times.

And right now, he plans to stick around for a few more seasons.

"I want to coach at least four years," he said. "I hope I can go longer than that, but we will see what happens. Tennessee Williams said one time, 'I knew nobody was immortal, but I thought I was the exception.' So I don't want to be foolish about it." ■ — *By Mark Derowitsch*

AT A GLANCE

AFFILIATION: Big Ten Conference.

PLAYS NEBRASKA: Sept. 13 in Lincoln.

STRENGTHS

Zack Mills returns at quarterback after guiding the Nittany Lions to a 9-4 record. It was Penn State's first winning season since 1999. Middle linebacker **Gino Capone** could be one of the best defenders in the Big 10. He finished with 86 tackles in just nine games last season.

QUESTION MARKS

Penn State must find a replacement for tailback **Larry Johnson**, and no one stepped up and took over the job during spring practice. The Nittany Lions' defensive front will have a new look, too.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

It'll be up to **Tony Johnson** to step out of the shadow of his brother Larry and step into the role as the team's No. 1 receiver coming off a 34-catch season. He's a big, physical player with good all-around skills and a ton of experience.

LIONS PICKED

A school-record four Nittany Lions were selected in the first round of the NFL Draft and six were selected in the initial two rounds, the most of any school.

BOWL TEAMS

Penn State will play seven teams — Ohio State, Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, Purdue, Minnesota and Boston College — who earned bowl invitations last season. Of the seven, only Nebraska and Iowa lost their bowl games.

LAST VISIT

Joe Paterno is no stranger to Lincoln, but only because he's been around so long. The Nittany Lions last visited Nebraska in 1981, and they left town with a 30-24 victory. Nebraska has won three of the five meetings in Lincoln, but Penn State leads the series 7-5 after its 40-7 victory last fall in University Park, Pa.

2002 RECORD: 9-4 CONFERENCE FINISH: 5-3

A 31	Central Florida	W, 27-24
S 14	Nebraska	W, 40-7
S 21	Louisiana Tech	W, 49-17
S 28	Iowa	L, 42-35 (ot)
O 5	@ Wisconsin	W, 34-31
O 12	@ Michigan	L, 27-24 (ot)
O 19	Northwestern	W, 49-0
O 26	@ Ohio State	L, 13-7
N 2	Illinois	W, 18-7
N 9	Virginia	W, 35-14
N 16	@ Indiana	W, 58-25
N 23	Michigan State	W, 61-7
J 1	& Auburn	L, 13-9

&Capital One Bowl, Orlando, Fla.

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	Tony Johnson	5-11 209 Sr.	DE	John Bronson	6-3 266 Jr.
	Gerald Smith	5-10 190 Jr.		Matt Rice	6-4 269 So.
LT	Chris McKelvy	6-4 327 Sr.	DT	Tama Hall	6-3 271 So.
	Charles Rush	6-2 298 So.		Scott Paxson	6-5 273 So.
LG	E.Z. Smith	6-1 283 So.	RT	Levi Brown	6-5 312 Fr.
or	Scott Davis	6-3 294 Jr.	or	Jason Robinson	6-3 277 Jr.
C	David Costlow	6-3 280 Sr.	DE	Sam Ruhe	6-6 265 Jr.
	Nick Marmo	6-5 298 Jr.		Jeremiah Davis	6-5 249 Jr.
RG	Tyler Reed	6-4 311 So.	LB	Deryck Toles	6-0 213 Sr.
	Steve Roach	6-2 314 Fr.		T.C. Crosby	6-0 224 Jr.
RT	Damone Jones	6-5 310 Sr.	LB	Gino Capone	6-2 238 Sr.
	John Wilson	6-6 313 So.		Andy Ryland	6-2 234 Sr.
TE	Casey Williams	6-0 237 Sr.	LB	Derek Wake	6-3 242 Jr.
	Mike Lukac	6-3 257 Sr.		Jim Mitchell	6-2 219 Jr.
QB	Zack Mills	6-3 216 Jr.	CB	Alan Zemaitis	6-2 197 So.
	Michael Robinson	6-2 225 So.		Maurice Humphrey	5-11 190 Fr.
RB	Mike Gasparanto	5-11 206 Jr.	FS	Andrew Guman	6-3 214 Jr.
	Ricky Upton	5-11 226 Sr.		Jim Kanuch	6-1 187 Fr.
FB	Sean McHugh	6-6 265 Sr.	H	Calvin Lowry	6-0 191 So.
or	Paul Jefferson	6-1 261 Sr.	or	Chris Harrell	6-2 202 Jr.
WR	Kitna Palmer	6-4 188 So.	CB	Rich Gardner	5-11 185 Sr.
	Ernie Terrell	6-3 197 So.		Glo Vendemia	6-0 185 So.
PK	Robbie Gould	6-1 167 Jr.	P	Jeremy Kapinos	6-1 234 Fr.

Players with starting experience in bold

SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI GOLDEN EAGLES

Southern Mississippi knows exactly what Nebraska went through during spring practice, installing a new offense in just three short weeks with hopes it would be ready to shine come fall.

The Golden Eagles abandoned their one-back attack in favor of a multiple-look offense that will predominately feature two-back sets. These Golden Eagles look to establish the run with a balanced attack.

So far, everything looks OK for Southern Mississippi, although the real test will be Aug. 30, when the Golden Eagles open the season at California.

New offensive coordinator Rip Scherer, the former head coach at Memphis, spent all spring installing his new offense. He kept it simple, putting in about half the playbook so as not to overload the Golden Eagles.

Head coach Jeff Bower, entering his 13th season at Southern Mississippi, likes what he has seen from his new-look offense.

"I mean, you're going to have a starting point with these guys, but with a new scheme and new coaches, it is going to be starting over in that sense," Bower told the Jackson (Miss.) Clarion-Ledger. "But that's good. It's kind of new life for some kids who maybe have been behind other guys."

Not everything went smoothly, but that's to be expected when teams are limited to just a few days of full-contact drills during the spring.

Quarterback Micky D'Angelo emerged from spring practice as the starter, picking up where he left off in his sophomore season, but he had to battle Dustin Almond to the wire.

During Southern Mississippi's Black and Gold Spring Game, D'Angelo threw for 157 yards and completed 13-of-23 passes, even though he's still picking up the new schemes.

"Obviously, it's a learning process," D'Angelo told the Clarion-Ledger. "And learning on the run, sometimes

that's the hardest thing to do."

By the time the Golden Eagles meet up with Nebraska on Sept. 25 in Hattiesburg, D'Angelo should be an old pro with Scherer's offense.

He did pretty well with the one-back set Southern Mississippi used the past six seasons. He started 10 games last season, throwing for 1,647 yards and seven touchdowns to lead the Golden Eagles to a 7-6 record.

Almond, who started once, played a significant role as well. Mostly as D'Angelo's backup, he threw for nearly 800 yards and was intercepted just three times.

Almond had the better day during the Black and Gold game, throwing for 167 yards and a touchdown, but D'Angelo remains the starter heading into fall camp.

"Dustin undoubtedly had his best scrimmage of the spring, but Micky is our No. 1 quarterback," Bower said. "This was probably the first workout of the spring that Dustin had a better day than Micky, and we'll go into the fall with Micky at the No. 1 spot."

Scherer was pleased with how quickly the Eagles picked up on the new formations.

"They're learning, and there's always a curve," Scherer said. "We've made progress."

"They can't just expect to put all this down and then to pick it back up in August. That's not going to work. They have a responsibility to keep working at this."

One position that could cause some concern is at tailback, where last year's leading rusher, Derrick Nix, moved on because of graduation. Nix rushed for 1,194 yards and 11 touchdowns, averaging 5.5 yards every time he touched the football.

Nix's backup, Anthony Harris, is back, but he had just 78 carries and gained 324 yards a year ago. Harris was hampered by injuries throughout the spring.

Junior James Walley emerged from spring practice as



Quarterback Micky D'Angelo passed for 1,647 yards and seven touchdowns as a sophomore. He completed 52.6 percent and was intercepted eight times.

the top tailback. He's coming off a 256-yard season.

At least the Golden Eagles have two experienced wide receivers they can lean on early in the season. Chris Johnson led the team with 50 receptions for 673 yards and three scores. Marvin Young was next, catching 41 passes for 615 yards and three touchdowns.

Perhaps the biggest concern on offense is along the line, where only tackle Jeremy Parquet and center Jim Hicks return. Hicks is an all-Conference USA candidate this fall.

Redshirt freshman Travis Cooley and junior Chris White, both guards, and sophomore tackle Neal Mead stood out during the spring, according to Bower.

"There's not a lot of experience there, but there's some talent there," Bower told the Clarion-Ledger following spring drills.



Southern Mississippi Sports Information

Middle linebacker Rod Davis ranked among the national leaders in solo tackles, total tackles and tackles for loss.

year ago.

During spring drills, sophomore Terrance Ford and redshirt freshmen Greg Casnave and Jared Parten showed improvement.

"We want to be a team that can stop the run and make more big plays," defensive coordinator Tyrone Nix told the Clarion-Ledger. "We want to be able to go out there and do it every time, force more three-and-outs."

The Golden Eagles appear to have decent linebackers, led by senior All-America candidate Rod Davis. The 6-3, 245-pound Davis led Southern Mississippi with 168 tackles, including 122 solo stops, and 10.5 sacks from his middle linebacker position. He was also in on an impressive 23.5 tackles behind the line of scrimmage and intercepted two passes. Michael Boley had eight sacks and 16 tackles for loss as the weakside linebacker.

Free safety Etric Pruitt leads a talented and experienced secondary. He led the team with six interceptions. The team's top cornerback, Greg Brooks, also returns after a three-interception season. Rover Alex Ray is back as well.

Special teams could pose a problem. Southern Mississippi has neither an experienced place kicker nor an experienced punter, and no one emerged to claim the jobs during spring practice. That will be an area of emphasis when fall camp begins. ■ — *By Mark Derowitsch*

AT A GLANCE

AFFILIATION: Conference USA.

PLAYS NEBRASKA: Sept. 25 in Hattiesburg, Miss.

STRENGTHS

Defensively, the Golden Eagles are talented and have an experienced player or two at just about every position. Middle inebacker **Rod Davis** is coming off an outstanding junior season. Southern Mississippi can hit you with two proven quarterbacks as well.

QUESTION MARKS

Southern Mississippi averaged nearly three turnovers per game, and cutting down on the number of mistakes could make a difference in the close ones. Finding a top-notch running back in the fall is a must, as well as replacing three starters on the offensive line.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Davis put up some amazing numbers as a junior. He was credited with 168 tackles, including 122 solo tackles and 23.5 tackles for losses. He also had 10.5 sacks, two interceptions and three fumble recoveries. Davis was named to the Playboy Preseason All-America team, joining **Ray Guy** (1972) as the only Southern Miss players ever to receive this award. Davis and teammate **Michael Boley**, a junior linebacker, have been named to the preliminary Watch List for the Lombardi Award.

THURSDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

The game against Nebraska Sept. 25 (ESPN TV) in Hattiesburg is one of three Thursday night games on the schedule. The Golden Eagles play at Alabama-Birmingham Sept. 4 (ESPN2) and play host to TCU Nov. 20 (ESPN).

STADIUM EXPANSION

Southern Miss hopes to expand its football stadium from 33,000 seats to 45,000 in the future. The cost would be \$40 million, of which \$28 million would come from the sale of new skyboxes.

2002 RECORD: 7-6 CONFERENCE FINISH: 5-3

A 31	Jackson State	W, 55-7
S 7	Illinois	W, 23-20
S 14	Memphis	W, 33-14
S 21	@ Alabama	L, 20-7
S 28	@ Army	W, 27-6
O 12	@ South Florida	L, 16-13
O 19	Cincinnati	W, 23-14
O 30	@ TCU	L, 37-7
N 9	@ UAB	W, 20-13
N 14	Louisville	L, 20-17 (2 ot)
N 23	@ Tulane	L, 31-10
N 30	East Carolina	W, 24-7
D 27	&Oklahoma St.	L, 33-23

&Houston Bowl, Houston, Texas

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

SE Chris Johnson	5-10 173 Jr.	DE Ronald Jones	6-3 265 Sr.
Pedl Causey	6-3 221 Fr.	Akeem Lockett	6-2 235 So.
LT Neal Mead	6-4 310 So.	NT Terrance Ford	6-4 280 So.
Myron Powe	6-4 298 Jr.	Jared Parten	6-2 257 Fr.
SG Travis Cooley	6-3 271 Fr.	DT Eric Scott	6-0 302 Jr.
Bradley Worthington	6-4 295 So.	Greg Casnave	6-3 281 Fr.
C Jim Hicks	6-4 258 Sr.	BAN Terrrell Paul	6-3 241 Sr.
Addaryl Edwards	6-3 280 Jr.	LeVon Pears	6-0 248 Jr.
RG Chris White	6-3 280 Jr.	SLB Michael Boley	6-3 218 Jr.
Ben Culp	6-5 302 Jr.	Kevis Coley	6-1 218 So.
RT Jeremy Parquet	6-7 312 Jr.	MLB Rod Davis	6-3 245 Sr.
George Batista	6-5 283 Fr.	Dillon Cleckler	6-2 230 Jr.
TE Terrrell Browden	6-3 260 Sr.	WLB Antoine Cash	6-1 208 Jr.
Otho Graves	6-5 260 Jr.	Carsha Siromas	6-2 209 Jr.
FL Antwon Courington	6-3 210 So.	FC Greg Brooks	5-11 175 Sr.
Rocky Harrison	6-1 205 So.	Seth Cumbie	5-11 180 Jr.
WR Marvin Young	6-0 165 Jr.	ROV Alex Ray	5-11 203 Sr.
DaRon Lawrence	6-3 205 Jr.	Darrell Bennett	6-0 206 Jr.
QB Micky D'Angelo	6-3 215 Jr.	FS Etric Pruitt	6-1 188 Sr.
Dustin Almond	6-2 211 So.	Travis Coley	6-1 220 So.
RB James Walley	5-10 196 Jr.	BC John Eubanks	5-11 175 Fr.
Anthony Harris	5-11 216 So.	Jasper Faulk	5-10 182 Fr.
PK Jacob Matlock	6-0 224 Sr.	P Luke Johnson	6-0 250 So.

Players with starting experience in bold

TROY STATE TROJANS

At first glance, agreeing to play Troy State on such short notice seemed like a safe bet for Nebraska.

The Huskers, after all, have played the Trojans each of the last two seasons, had little difficulty (winning both games by a combined score of 73-30) and would already have an idea about what Troy State is all about.

Of course, Troy State had to go and make it just a tad more difficult for the Huskers.

When the Trojans come calling on the Huskers in early October, they'll bring a new-look offense with them.

Before spring drills began, Coach Larry Blakeney decided the Trojan offense needed an overhaul. Nothing major, mind you, but a tweak here and there.

For starters, the Trojans will no longer line up four wide receivers most downs. Instead, they'll line up in an I-formation most of the time, using two running backs in an attempt to play more power football. Sure, there will be times when Blakeney will use four wideouts in a spread formation, their base set in the past, but that will be the exception this season, rather than the norm.

The change, according to Blakeney, makes sense with the current group of Trojans.

"I think this offense will suit the personnel we have better than what we have been doing," he said. "It is just a matter of finding where the good players are and trying to find a way to get the ball to them."

The reason for the dramatic change is to cut down on turnovers, which plagued the Trojans last season. In 11 games, Troy State gave up the football by fumble or interception 35 times, which translated into 74 points for the opponents.

Take away turnovers in two pivotal games, and the Trojans could have easily finished 6-6 instead of a disappointing 4-8. For instance, Troy State had four giveaways

against Alabama-Birmingham, which led to 17 points. The Trojans lost 27-26. They also had six turnovers in an 11-8 loss to Mississippi State.

"We'll major in more two-back, especially in normal situations," Blakeney said. "We won't be in four-wide very much, but there will be times when we are going to be in four wide."

"I hope people notice that we are a lot more disciplined, and that we have an idea about taking care of the

football, and that they are playing awfully hard. If we can do that offensively, I'll be pleased."

The Trojans' quarterback will remain the same.

Hansell Bearden started 12 games last season and returns to claim his starting job. He threw for 1,462 yards and six touchdowns a year ago, but he was picked off 16 times.

Blakeney expects bigger and better things out of his quarterback this fall.

"There were times last year when I thought Hansell was going to fight his way through everything, and then there were times when I was worried about him," Blakeney said. "I thought he was a lot better late in the year, once we settled him down and didn't give him quite as much to think about."

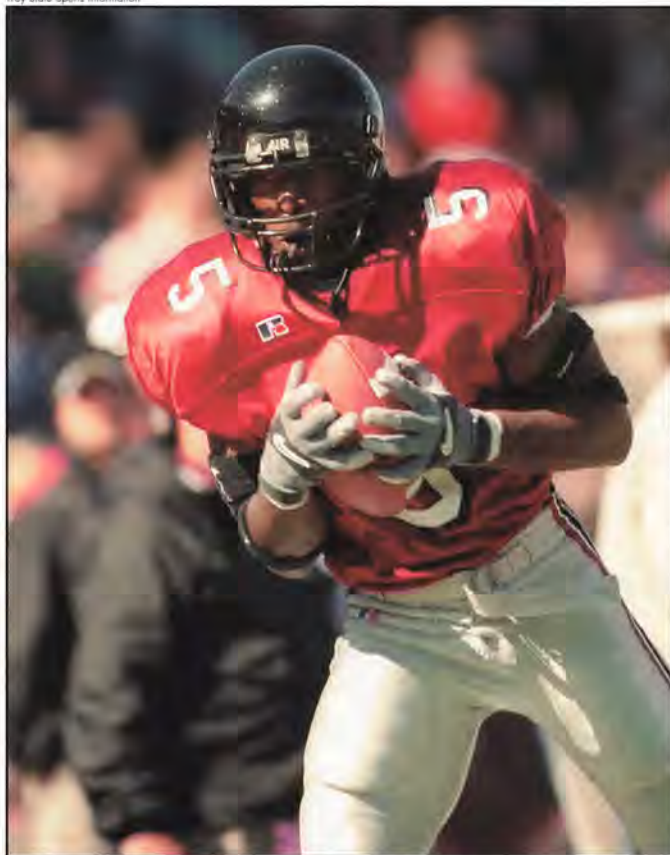
"I think Hansell will thrive in this system a lot more so than with what we were trying to do."

What the Trojan offense needs is better production out of the rest of the backfield, especially at tailback. Gone is LeBarron Black, who led the team in rushing in 2002 with 757 yards and eight touchdowns.

However, DeWhitt Betterson returns, and he gained 711 yards and scored five times while backing up Black. Betterson played in all 11 games, touching the football 101 times.

Betterson will be pushed by Marlo East, who is coming off a redshirt season. East is a 6-foot, 180-pound speedster

Troy State Sports Information



Split end Jason Samples was Troy State's top receiver. He had 45 catches, averaging more than 12 yards.

who will complement the more bruising Betterson. Marrio Fraser and Jermaine Richardson will vie for playing time as well.

"The position should be one of our strengths," Blakeney said. "We only have one guy who has played a whole lot (Betterson). Marlo East was redshirted, but I think he has great potential.

"This should be a good position for us, if Marlo is what I think he is, and Jermaine can get well, and if Marrio can hold onto the ball."

How the Trojans handle the new scheme up front will be an aspect to watch. Only right tackle Branden Hall (6-4, 318 pounds) and right guard Donnie Bostian (6-6, 321) return as starters. In addition, tight end Adrian Moore started six games. Heading into fall camp, redshirt freshman Kirbie Bodiford and junior Henry Tellis will

man the left side, while Lee Milliner is penciled in at center.

When the Trojans throw, they'll have an experienced target. Split end Jason Samples was the team's top pass catcher a year ago with 45. He averaged more than 12 yards every time he touched the ball.

Junior college transfer Bryant Stewart is expected to ease some of Samples' load. He caught 80 passes for 1,374 yards and 16 touchdowns in 2002 at Reedley (Calif.) Junior College.

Senior right tackle Branden Hall is one of two starters returning to the offensive line.

The Trojans will show a new look defensively, too. Not because of a system change (the Trojans will stay in a 4-3 defense), but because they'll have so many new faces lining up close to the ball.

Five of the Trojans' top six defensive linemen are gone, in addition to all three starting linebackers.

At least first-year defensive coordinator Vic Koenning will have two standout players to build around in end Demarcus Ware and safety Derrick Ansley. Ware is coming off a 15-sack season. He also tied for team-high honors with 22 tackles behind the line of scrimmage. Only three other Trojans linemen (Cedric Phillips, Larry Brown and Jamaal Holt) have Division I experience.

Ansley, who had 82 tackles as a sophomore, leads an experienced secondary. Both cornerbacks — Johnny Faulk and Adrian Ghent — return as well. Two other cornerbacks — Rayshun Reed and Freeman White — started in 2001 and missed last fall because of injuries. White suffered a knee injury during preseason practice, while Reed had the same injury in the season-opener against Nebraska.

"I feel better about our secondary than any other position," Blakeney said. "Freeman White and Rayshun Reed (were) limited in what they can do in the spring, but I still feel good about the combination of youth and experience we have back there." ■ — *By Mark Derowitsch*



Troy State Sports Information

AT A GLANCE

AFFILIATION: Independent.

PLAYS NEBRASKA: Oct. 4 in Lincoln.

STRENGTHS

It should be difficult to throw against the Trojan secondary. Troy State features four cornerbacks — **Johnny Faulk, Adrian Ghent, Rayshun Reed and Freeman White** — with starting experience, although Reed and White are coming off knee injuries. Tailback DeWhitt Betterson averaged 7 yards per carry in a reserve role last season and should get the bulk of the work this fall.

QUESTION MARKS

It may prove to be easy to run up the middle against the Trojans. Only one starter in the front seven comes back, and all three linebackers are new. Offensively, the Trojans must cut down on turnovers.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

End **Demarcus Ware**, the only returning starter among the defensive linemen and linebackers, had 15 sacks as a sophomore. He also had 22 tackles for losses.

CONFERENCE TIES

Troy State has accepted an invitation to move its athletic programs to the Sun Belt Conference.

The Trojans, who currently compete in the Atlantic Sun Conference in all sports but football, will become a full Sun Belt member in the fall of 2005, while the football program will begin play in 2004.

ROAD WARRIORS

Troy State will play eight games on the road this year, and will travel more than 7,000 miles before the season comes to a close. Among the road opponents are Minnesota, Utah State and Nebraska.

EXPERIENCED COORDINATOR

New defensive coordinator **Vic Koenning** spent the past three years as the head coach at Wyoming. He was replaced by Lincoln, Neb., native **Joe Glenn**.

2002 RECORD: 4-8 INDEPENDENT

A 31	@ Nebraska	L, 31-16
S 7	@ UAB	L, 27-26
S 14	Southern Utah	W, 40-15
S 21	@ Iowa State	L, 42-12
S 28	@ Missouri	L, 44-7
O 5	Ausin Peay	W, 41-3
O 12	@ Mississippi St.	L, 11-8
O 19	@ Marshall	L, 24-7
O 26	Florida Atlantic	W, 21-6
N 2	@ Arkansas	L, 23-0
N 9	Florida A&M	W, 24-7
N 16	Utah State	L, 19-16

TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

SE	Jason Samples	6-3	185	Jr.	LE	Cedric Phillips	6-2	240	Sr.
	Zean Robinson	6-2	180	Fr.		Jammal Holt	6-1	242	Jr.
LT	Henry Tellis	6-5	297	Jr.	NT	Torre Lankford	6-2	280	So.
	Joe Fowler	6-5	305	Jr.		Guy Goodlow	6-3	285	Fr.
LG	Kirbie Bodiford	6-4	271	Fr.	DT	Eric Thomas	6-1	250	Jr.
	Junior Louissaint	6-2	285	Jr.		David Trumble	6-2	280	So.
C	Lee Milliner	6-3	270	Jr.	RE	Demarcus Ware	6-5	220	Jr.
	Wes Garmon	6-1	281	So.		Cedric Sullivan	6-3	235	Jr.
RG	Donnie Bostian	6-6	321	Jr.	SLB	Robby Farmer	6-1	220	Jr.
	Kyle Smith	6-3	325	Jr.	or	Keith Staple	6-2	220	So.
RT	Branden Hall	6-4	318	Sr.	MLB	Leverne Johnson	6-0	235	So.
	James Edwards	6-5	285	So.		Torrence Smith	6-1	235	Fr.
TE	Adrian Moore	6-1	243	Sr.	WLB	Bernard Davis	6-1	230	So.
	Rob Austin	6-6	252	So.		David Johnson	5-11	220	So.
QB	Hansell Bearden	6-2	200	Jr.	LCB	Johnny Faulk	5-11	175	So.
	Franco Johnson	6-2	200	Jr.		Rayshun Reed	5-11	190	Sr.
RB	DeWhitt Betterson	6-0	210	Jr.	FS	Derrick Ansley	6-1	180	Jr.
	Marlo East	6-0	180	Fr.		Ronald Harper	6-0	180	Sr.
FB	Chris Cox	5-9	200	Sr.	SS	Damien Coleman	6-0	195	Jr.
	Jordan Lesley	6-2	223	Jr.		Arthur Adams	5-10	200	Jr.
FL	Toris Rutledge	6-3	175	So.	RCB	Adrian Ghent	5-8	183	So.
	Bryant Stewart	6-1	190	Jr.		Freeman White	5-9	175	Jr.
PK	Thomas Olmsted	6-4	215	So.	P	Thomas Olmsted	6-4	215	So.

Players with starting experience in bold

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Every Interception = -1 point

BONUS Points—Defense

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Rushing Yards Under 100 = 5 points
Every Sack = 1 point
Every Interception = 1 point

BONUS Points—Team

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Loss = -10 points
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Getting Shutout = -10 points
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<input type="checkbox"/> Alabama	\$1,320,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Georgia Tech	\$1,215,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nebraska	\$1,435,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Syracuse	\$820,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Arizona	\$380,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawaii	\$680,000	<input type="checkbox"/> New Mexico	\$565,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Tennessee	\$1,600,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Arizona State	\$1,055,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois	\$1,165,000	<input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina	\$750,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Texas	\$2,050,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Arkansas	\$1,500,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Indiana	\$300,000	<input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina St.	\$1,385,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Texas A&M	\$1,030,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Army	\$300,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Iowa	\$1,410,000	<input type="checkbox"/> North Texas	\$420,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Texas Christian	\$690,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Auburn	\$1,600,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Iowa State	\$1,025,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Illinois	\$505,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Texas Tech	\$1,330,000
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Boise State	\$1,000,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kansas State	\$1,710,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Northwestern	\$350,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Toledo	\$865,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Boston College	\$1,120,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Kentucky	\$385,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Notre Dame	\$1,400,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Tulane	\$305,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Bowling Green	\$530,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Louisville	\$850,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Ohio State	\$2,135,000	<input type="checkbox"/> UCLA	\$1,255,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Brigham Young	\$400,000	<input type="checkbox"/> LSU	\$1,415,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oklahoma	\$2,200,000	<input type="checkbox"/> USC	\$1,840,000
<input type="checkbox"/> California	\$365,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Marshall	\$895,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Oklahoma State	\$790,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Utah	\$425,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Central Florida	\$485,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Maryland	\$1,745,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Oregon	\$1,430,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Vanderbilt	\$300,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Cincinnati	\$475,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Miami (Ohio)	\$775,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Oregon State	\$1,275,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia	\$1,320,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Clemson	\$1,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Miami, FL	\$2,190,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Penn State	\$1,340,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Tech	\$1,670,000
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<input type="checkbox"/> Florida	\$1,790,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Mississippi	\$925,000	<input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina	\$815,000	<input type="checkbox"/> West Virginia	\$880,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Florida State	\$1,900,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Mississippi State	\$460,000	<input type="checkbox"/> South Florida	\$930,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin	\$1,295,000

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Huskers Illustrated

- 1. Ohio State . . . Clarett will be even better**
- 2. Oklahoma . . . defense is the game in Norman**
- 3. Miami . . . succeeding Dorsey will be tough**
- 4. Auburn . . . first SEC title since 1989**
- 5. Texas . . . 'Horns can't beat Oklahoma**
- 6. USC . . . Williams is a winner at receiver**
- 7. Georgia . . . double threat at quarterback**
- 8. Virginia Tech . . . Jones all alone at tailback**
- 9. Kansas State . . . key game at Austin in October**
- 10. N. Carolina St. . . . Wolfpack sights on BCS bowl**
- 11. Pittsburgh . . . example of Pederson's handiwork**
- 12. Michigan . . . difficult to unseat Ohio State**
- 13. Washington . . . Neuheisel needs a running game**
- 14. Florida St. . . . rugged nonconference schedule**
- 15. Wisconsin . . . rebounding from 2-6 in Big 10**
- 16. Oregon State . . . Riley returns to Corvallis**

Top 25

BCS Schedule

Jan. 1, 2004 — Rose Bowl
Jan. 1, 2004 — Orange Bowl
Jan. 2, 2004 — Fiesta Bowl
Jan. 4, 2004 — Sugar Bowl*

*National Championship Game

Key Games

Aug. 30 — USC at Auburn
Aug. 30 — Washington at Ohio St.
Sept. 13 — N. Carolina St. at Ohio St.
Oct. 4 — Kansas State at Texas
Oct. 11 — Oklahoma vs. Texas, Dallas
Oct. 11 — Miami at Florida State
Oct. 25 — USC at Washington
Nov. 1 — Miami at Virginia Tech
Nov. 8 — Virginia Tech at Pittsburgh
Nov. 15 — Auburn at Georgia
Nov. 22 — Ohio State at Michigan
Nov. 29 — Miami at Pittsburgh
Dec. 6 — Big 12 Champ., Kansas City
Dec. 6 — SEC Championship, Atlanta

Final 2002 Ratings

Associated Press

Team (Record)	Points
1. Ohio State (14-0)	1,775
2. Miami, Fla. (12-1)	1,693
3. Georgia (13-1)	1,598
4. USC (11-2)	1,590
5. Oklahoma (12-2)	1,476
6. Texas (11-2)	1,363
7. Kansas State (11-2)	1,356
8. Iowa (11-2)	1,334
9. Michigan (10-3)	1,182
10. Washington St. (10-3)	1,085
11. Alabama (10-3)	988
12. North Carolina St. (11-3)	943
13. Maryland (11-3)	844
14. Auburn (9-4)	821
15. Boise State (12-1)	692
16. Penn State (9-4)	675
17. Notre Dame (10-3)	657
18. Virginia Tech (10-4)	544
19. Pittsburgh (9-4)	520
20. Colorado (9-5)	307
21. Florida State (9-5)	291
22. Virginia (9-5)	250
23. TCU (10-2)	231
24. Marshall (11-2)	201
25. West Virginia (9-4)	195

Coaches

Team (Record)	Points
1. Ohio State (14-0)	1,525
2. Miami, Fla. (12-1)	1,451
3. Georgia (13-1)	1,378
4. USC (11-2)	1,362
5. Oklahoma (12-2)	1,244
6. Kansas State (11-2)	1,230
7. Texas (11-2)	1,140
8. Iowa (11-2)	1,105
9. Michigan (10-3)	1,011
10. Washington St. (10-3)	932
11. North Carolina St. (11-3)	876
12. Boise State (12-1)	808
13. Maryland (11-3)	803
14. Virginia Tech (10-4)	644
15. Penn State (9-4)	619
16. Auburn (9-4)	579
17. Notre Dame (10-3)	525
18. Pittsburgh (9-4)	486
19. Marshall (11-2)	333
20. West Virginia (9-4)	297
21. Colorado (9-5)	291
22. TCU (10-2)	274
23. Florida State (9-5)	219
24. Florida (8-5)	145
25. Virginia (9-5)	141

17. Colorado State . . . Rams deserve some respect

18. Maryland . . . can Perry return to 2001 form

19. Notre Dame . . . not likely to repeat 10 wins

20. Penn State . . . NFL draft depleted Nittany Lions

21. Florida . . . reputation alone is good for here

22. Nebraska . . . this is Huskers Illustrated after all

23. Alabama . . . Shula has big task ahead

24. Hawaii . . . Chang takes to the air again, and again

25. Boise State . . . Dinwiddie still directs attack

CROSSWORD TRIVIA

ACROSS

- 2 Network for NU-Colorado telecast
- 7 NU's No. 2 (defense)
- 9 NU's 2003 opener
- 14 NU's defensive coordinator
- 15 NU's assistant head coach
- 17 2002 Heisman Trophy winner
- 19 NU's offensive coordinator
- 21 2002 Big 12 champion
- 22 2001 Heisman Trophy winner
- 23 Redshirt freshman QB who transferred
- 24 Season Frank Solich is in as head coach
- 25 Scored only touchdown in Spring Game
- 27 2003 Big 12 Championship Game city
- 28 NU's No. 2 (offense)

DOWN

- 1 NU's leading tackler in 2002
- 2 1993 Butkus Award winner
- 3 NU's leading rusher in 2002
- 4 Winner in Spring Game
- 5 Big 12 Conference office city
- 6 1994 Outland Trophy winner
- 8 1997 Outland Trophy winner
- 10 NU's defensive tackle from Canada
- 11 2002 national champion
- 12 Matt Herian's hometown
- 13 NU's No. 1 (defense)
- 16 NU offensive tackle from Arizona
- 18 David Horne's hometown
- 20 NU's only 4-time all-conference pick
- 23 NU's No. 1 (offense)
- 26 Network for NU-Southern Miss telecast

Answers in August issue



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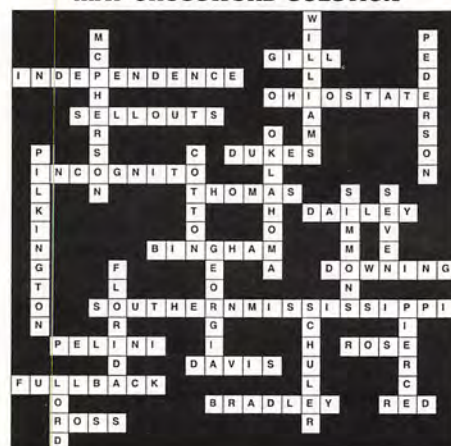
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No More Halos

NCAA changes rules concerning punt returns, preseason practice structure

Among the NCAA rules changes this season is the elimination of the 2-yard "halo" restriction on punt returns. The rule, established in 1983, provided for a penalty when the 2-yard "halo" was violated. Punt returners still must be given an opportunity to catch the ball "unimpeded."

The penalty for tackling a returner before the ball arrives will be 15 yards from the spot of the foul. That also will be the penalty for contacting a returner who has signaled for a fair catch.

Eliminating the "halo" is going to make returning punts "a lot tougher," Nebraska Coach Frank Solich said. "Now teams will be forced to want to fair catch. We will not want to fair catch."

"We're going to use a guy that's got some courage, is going to have to take a few licks."

Besides finding a punt returner with the ability to make the first tackler down field miss, "we're going to have to have great corners that will be able to block the 'bullets,'" said Solich.

The selection process began during spring practice and will continue during two-a-days.

Replacing DeJuan Groce won't be easy for Nebraska. He led the Big 12 and ranked fourth nationally in punt returns, averaging 17 yards and taking back four for touchdowns.

"We got so used to what DeJuan did for us," Solich said. "If you start to take that away, that's a lot of lost yardage, minus yardage that you'll never get back. So we need a guy that can do that."

The NCAA also has changed rules involving the structure of preseason practice. Although teams still will be allowed 29 practices before their opening games, they will not be allowed to have two-a-day practices on consecutive days. The change "stems from some of the heat-related problems that maybe existed in fall camp for some teams, for some programs," said Solich.

The heat-related problems, which in some cases led to deaths, "got the doctors and trainers to really look at how teams were practicing and is there a better way?" he said.

In addition, Solich said, scholarship freshmen will not be able to report three days in advance of varsity players. "Everybody will come in, as we understand it, on one date."

Allowing freshmen to start early "gives them a chance to get to know the system a little bit before being thrown in the mix with the returning varsity players," he said.

Even though the change is "certainly not an advantage for a freshman, the really good freshmen, the guys that were able to make it to begin with, will still be able to survive," said Solich. ■

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The Time Had Come

Unpredictability is more important than ratios and rushing titles



Mike BABCOCK

STEPPING ASIDE as offensive coordinator wasn't easy. But it wasn't as difficult as Frank Solich expected. Or maybe it was and Nebraska's sixth-year head coach won't admit it.

"I thought I'd be biting at the bit a little more than I was," Solich said not long after the end of spring practice. "I thought I'd be interrupting Barney (Cotton) a fair amount and talking to him about how we used to do it. But I didn't find myself doing that, and I think one of the reasons is that Barney is so competent. I felt very relaxed about his ability to coordinate and run our offense."

For Solich, it was probably a little like turning over the keys to the family car, or in Cotton's case pickup truck, one passed down and maintained in such good running condition.

Even though the odometer has turned over once or twice, the pickup is well-maintained and still rolls down the road. So there was going to be some hesitancy on Solich's part.

Cotton was bound to do some customizing of the vehicle that is the Cornhusker offense, and which Tom Osborne, Solich's Hall of Fame predecessor, drove for so many seasons. It was good for hauling around those three national championship trophies.

Cotton has had his head under the hood since the day he arrived from New Mexico State, tinkering with the engine, wrench in hand, droplight hanging down, grease rag on the fender.

Some of the bumper stickers are beginning to peel off, one quoting the late Woody Hayes about how three things can happen when a football is thrown and two of those things are bad and another that says, "My favorite teams are the Cornhuskers and anybody who's playing Oklahoma."

With an overhaul and regular maintenance, the pickup will run just fine. Trust me. The Ford Galaxie my parents bought new in 1965 is still running, with the original 352 engine. It has gone more than 300,000 miles, irrefutable evidence that they aren't made like they used to be.

Solich was a senior at Nebraska in 1965, on a team that led the nation in rushing. The rushing title was the second in Cornhusker history, the first coming two seasons before.

Nebraska wouldn't earn another until 1980, after Osborne decided that to beat Oklahoma you had to play the way Oklahoma played, which meant running the ball with an athletic quarterback. Since then, the Cornhuskers have won 12 more rushing titles, including two under Solich.

Nebraska also has led the conference in rushing for 15 consecutive seasons. The ability to run the ball has been a significant factor in Cornhuskers' success during the past four decades. No one would even attempt to dispute that.

Nebraska has been the nation's definitive rushing team.

Some players have suggested that winning rushing titles was becoming an obsession, however, and like most obsessions, it had the potential to be unhealthy, obscuring the goal of any offense, which is to score points. "It almost seemed like we were running the ball to death," one said.

Whether or not that was the case, Solich has made a long-recommended change.

Some will be disappointed because the offense won't look dramatically different. But "the big thing with us is, hopefully, defenses will realize when they play against us, we're going to attack them, try to make them defend the whole football field, be a little bit unpredictable," Cotton said.

As for run-to-pass ratio, "we'll probably be about 2-to-1, 60-40," he said.

The ratio was 3-to-1 last season. And Nebraska finished fourth nationally in rushing.

Unpredictability is more important than ratios and rushing titles, however.

"We don't want to ever just get in a rhythm, unless something's really working, to make the defense think that we're one-dimensional," said Cotton. "We'd like to be two-dimensional."

He can't will the offense to be two-dimensional, of course. That will depend on execution, the passing of Jammal Lord and a line capable of protecting him, among other things.

Still, Solich's willingness to change, to give up the keys to that reliable red pickup, is reason for optimism in a program that has struggled to deal with the unknown following a 7-7 season.

Among the first orders of business for new athletic director Steve Pederson was putting last season's redesigned uniforms out at a garage sale, donating them to Goodwill or disposing of them in some other way. The uniforms had nothing to do with 7-7. But some things shouldn't be changed.

The offense, however, is a different matter. The time had come.

One .500 record in 40-plus years might be tolerable. But two certainly won't be. And as someone once said, there is no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to change.

If you listen closely, you might hear Cotton revving the engine at South Stadium. ■



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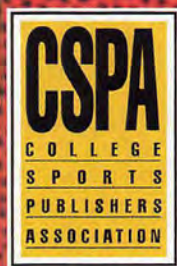
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